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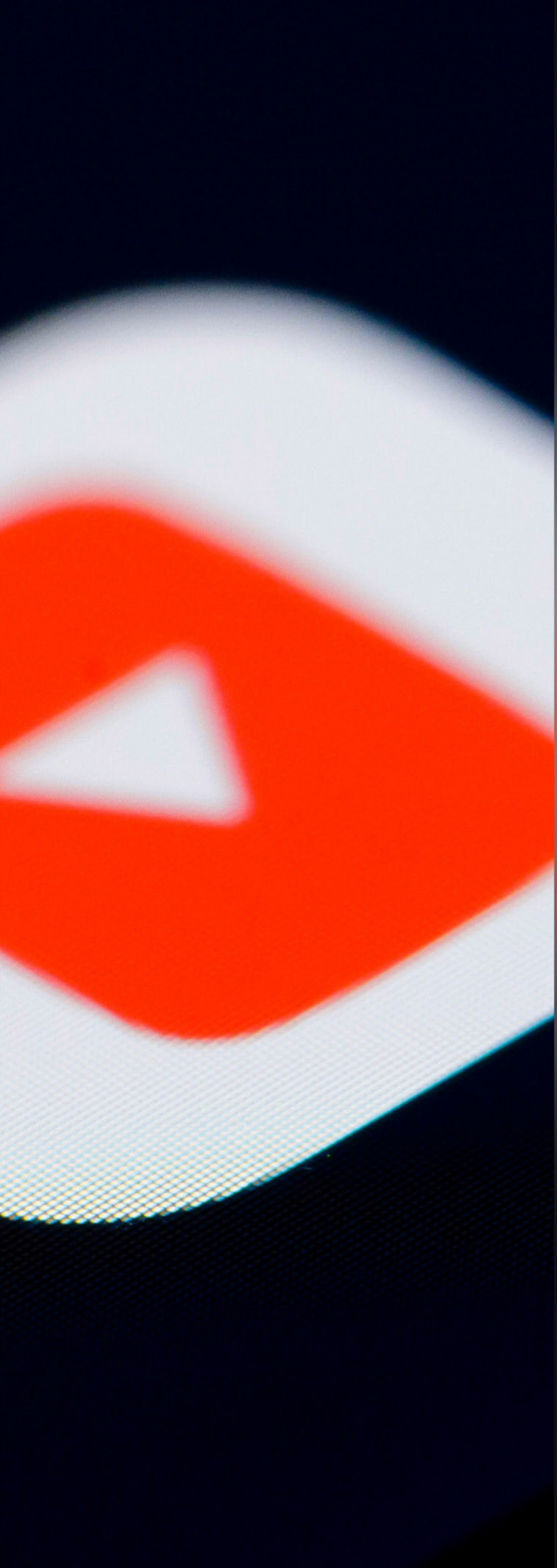
YouTube



FACT CHECKERS SAY YOUTUBE LETS ITS PLATFORM BE ‘WEAPONIZED’

More than 80 fact checking organizations are calling on YouTube to address what they say is rampant misinformation on the platform.

In a letter to CEO Susan Wojcicki published Wednesday, the groups say the Google-owned video platform is “one of the major conduits of online disinformation and misinformation worldwide.”

YouTube’s efforts to address the problem, they say, are proving insufficient.

“What we do not see is much effort by YouTube to implement policies that address the problem,” the letter says. “On the contrary, YouTube is allowing its platform to be weaponized by unscrupulous actors to manipulate and exploit others, and to organize and fundraise themselves.”

The problem, these groups said, is especially rampant in non-English speaking countries and the global south.

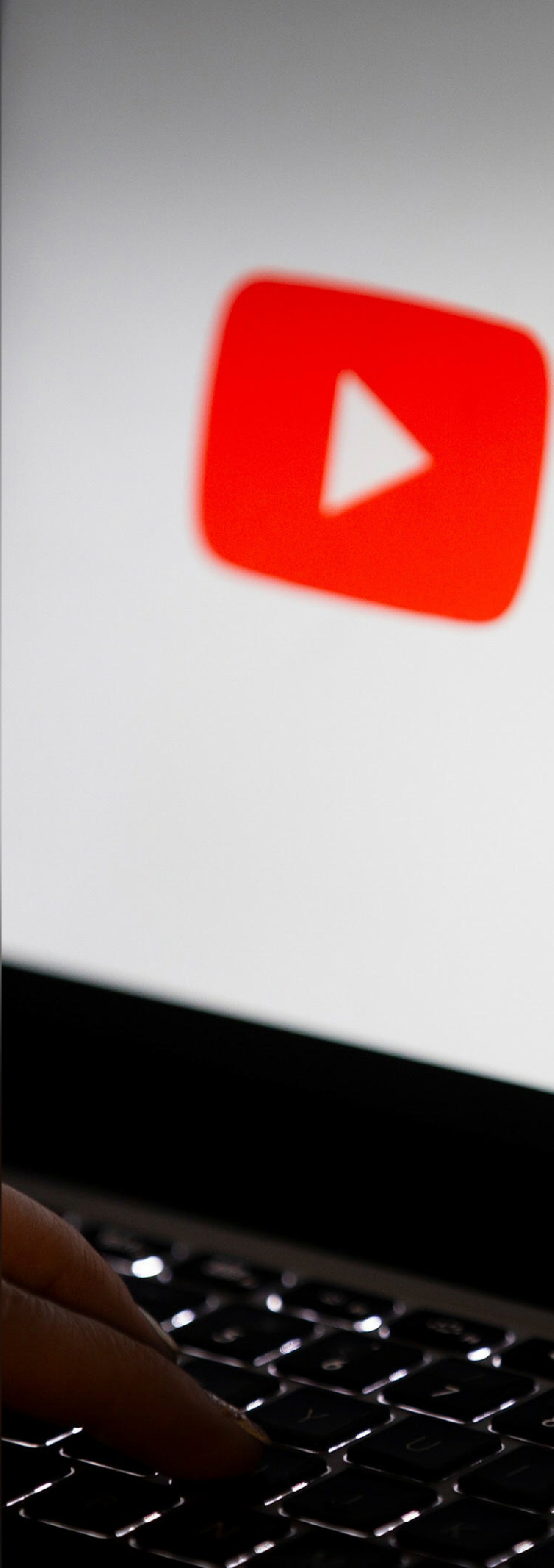
The fact checkers are all members of the International Fact Checking Network and include Rappler in the Philippines, Africa Check, Science Feedback in France and dozens of other groups. They lambasted YouTube, saying it frames discussions about disinformation as a "false dichotomy" of deleting or not deleting content.

Displaying fact-checked information is more effective than deleting content, the fact checkers wrote.

They propose that YouTube focuses on providing context and debunks that are "clearly superimposed" on videos. They also called for YouTube to act against repeat offenders and beef up efforts against misinformation in languages other than English.

In a statement, YouTube spokesperson Elena Hernandez said the company has "invested heavily in policies and products in all countries we operate to connect people to authoritative content, reduce the spread of borderline misinformation, and remove violative videos."

She called fact checking "a crucial tool to help viewers make their own informed decisions," but added that it is "one piece of a much larger puzzle to address the spread of misinformation."



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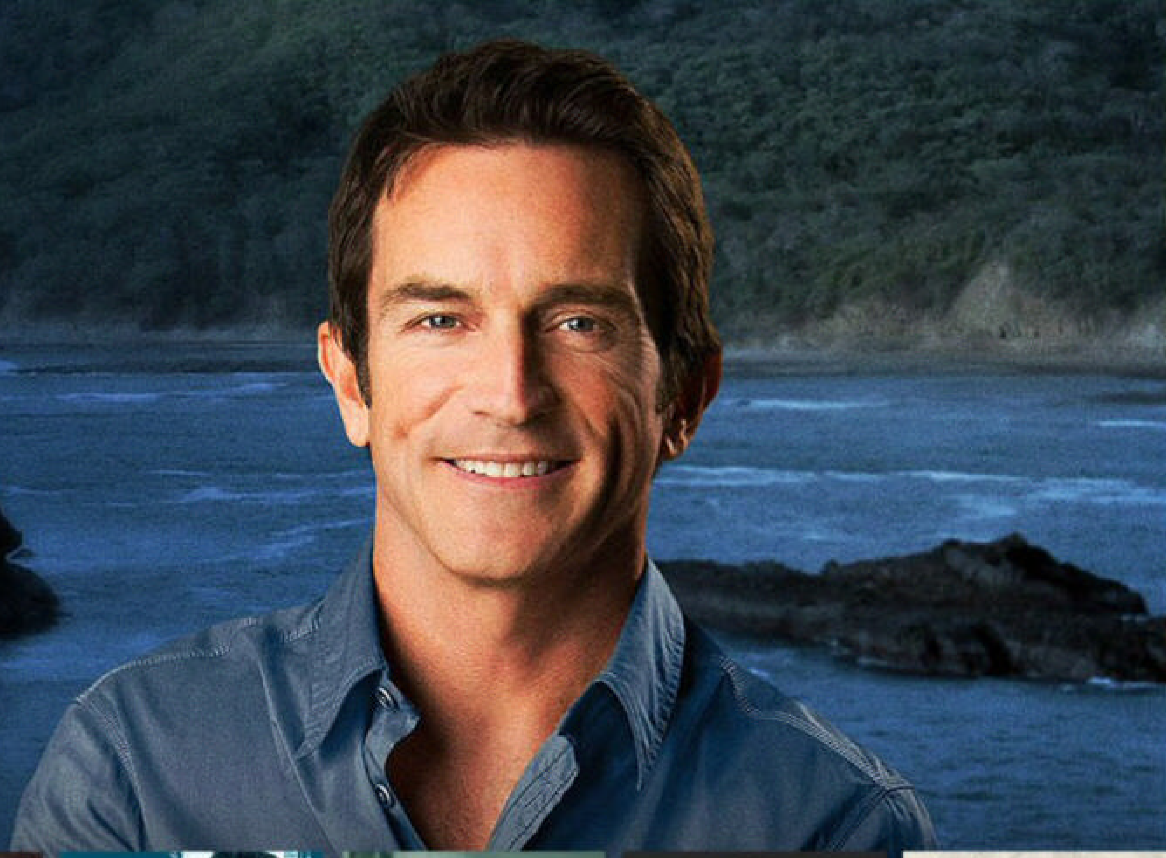

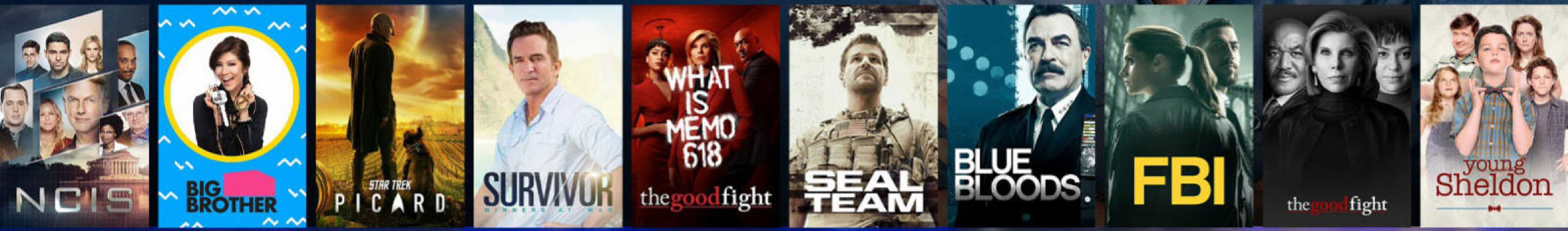
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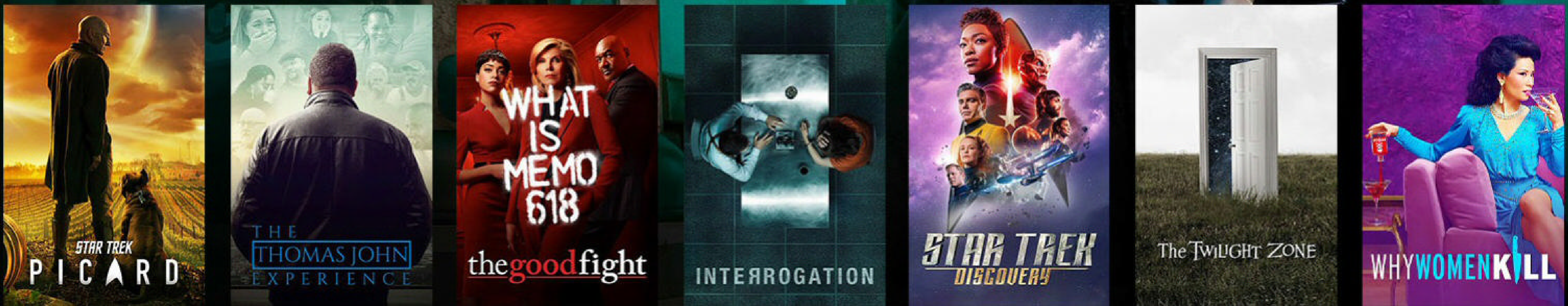
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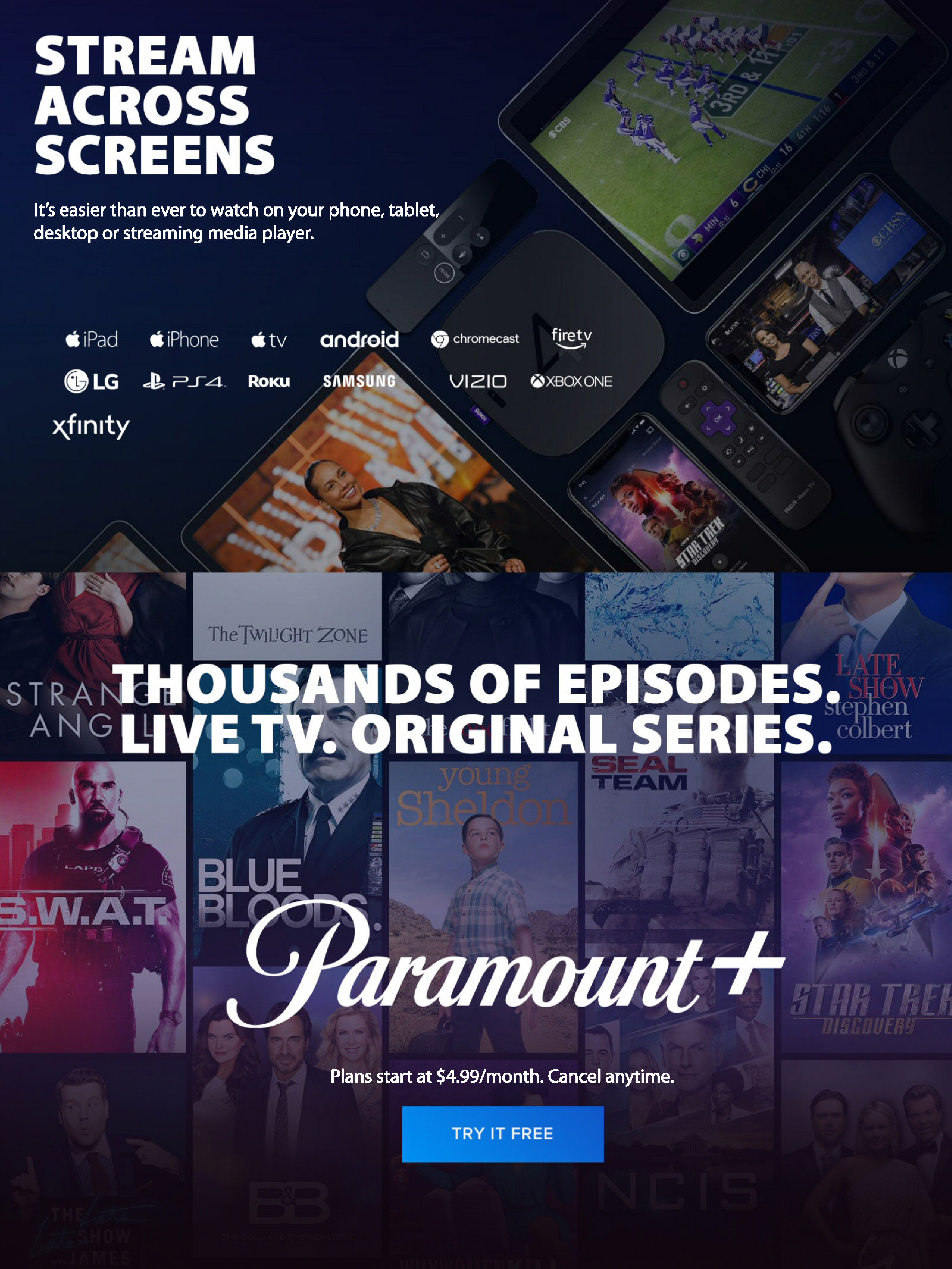

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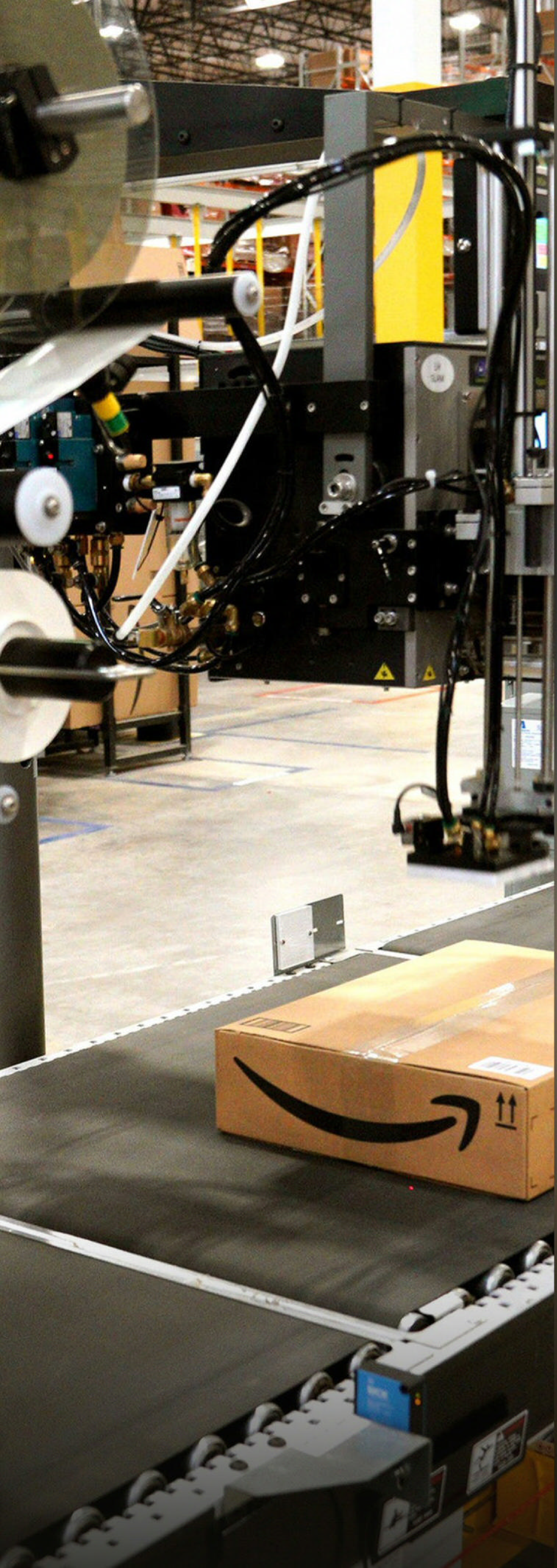

Amazon plans to open a new warehouse in central Indiana this year that the online retail giant says will bring hundreds of new jobs to the area.

Amazon is leasing the 510,000-square-foot (47,380-square-meter) warehouse along Interstate 65 in Franklin, about 20 miles (32.2 kilometers) south of Indianapolis.

The Seattle-based company said Wednesday in a news release that the new sorting and shipping warehouse will bring operations close to area customers and create "hundreds" of jobs in Franklin.

Mayor Steve Barnett said the exact number of expected jobs has not yet been shared with the city, the Daily Journal reported. City officials said the warehouse will receive inventory and workers will sort and ship orders.

The average starting wage will be $18 per hour, said Kyle DeGiulio, regional economic development manager at Amazon, said in a news release.

In the past 12 years, Amazon has created over 20,000 jobs in Indiana and invested over $15 billion across the state, officials said.

There are already three Amazon facilities operating in Greenwood, while another is operating in Whiteland, with each serving a different purpose.

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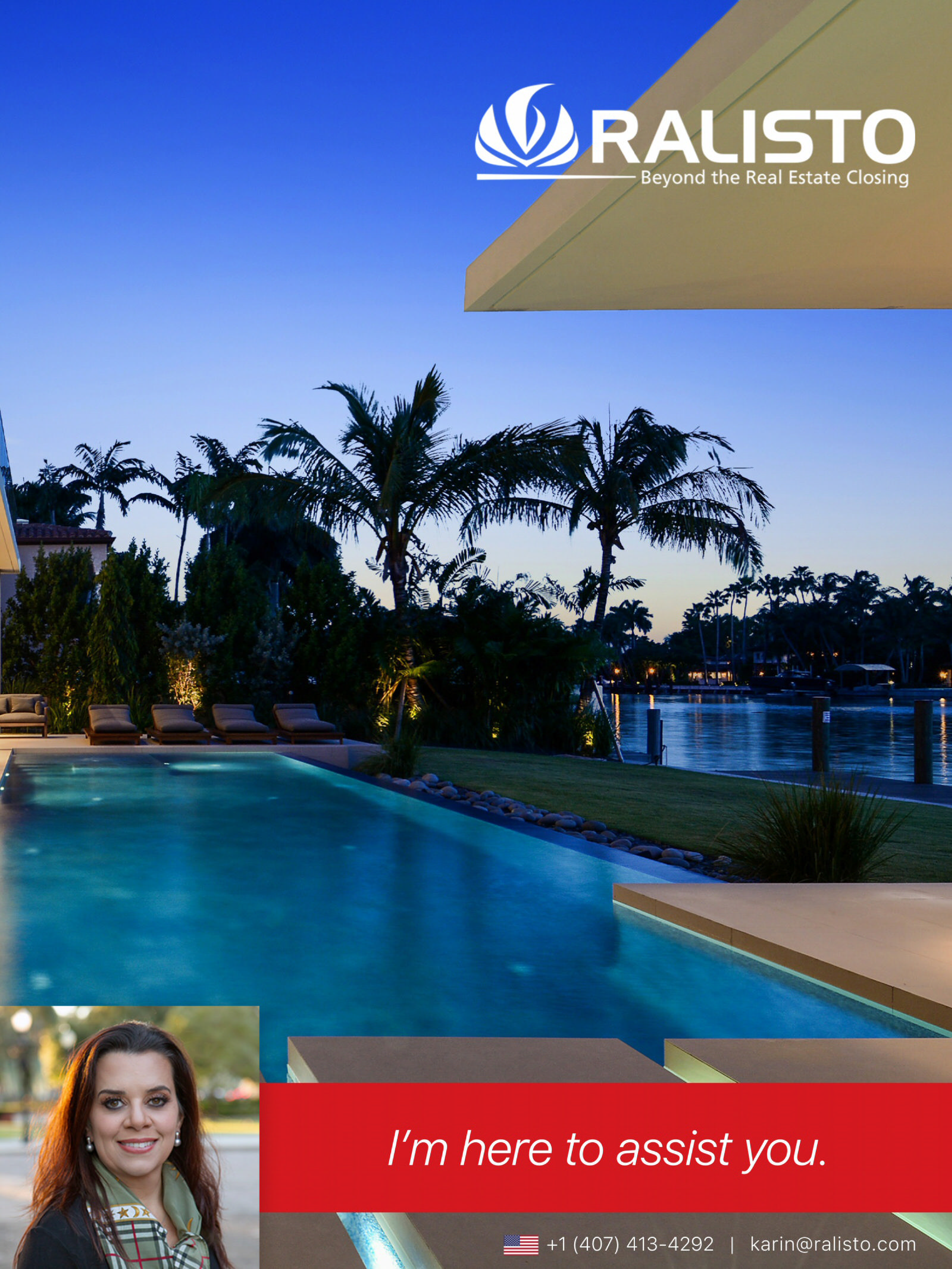
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AFTER WAVE OF CANCELLATIONS, DELTA SEES RECOVERY IN 2022

Delta Air Lines lost $408 million in the final quarter of 2021, dragged down by a COVID-19 surge that rocked the airline in December, and the carrier predicted Thursday that it will suffer one more quarterly loss before travel perks up in spring and summer.

CEO Ed Bastian said 8,000 employees have contracted COVID-19 over the last four weeks. Sick workers and winter storms have led to more than 2,200 cancelled flights since Dec. 24.

Cancellations have dropped sharply in the past few days, but the spate of spiked flights cost the airline $75 million and the latest outbreak, caused by the omicron variant of the virus, is expected to push the industry's recovery back by two months.

"I don't think we're going to see a pickup in bookings or travel during January and probably the first part of February," Bastian said in an

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interview. "It's always the weakest part of the year, and it's going to be that much weaker because of omicron. We need confidence in travel returning once the virus recedes."

Delta expects omicron infections to peak over the next few days and then decline rapidly as it has in South Africa and — more slowly — in the United Kingdom.

Omicron has halted a long, slow rise in travel and thrown it into reverse. So far in January, the number of people flying in the U.S. is down 20% from same month in 2019 — worse than the 16% declines in November and December.

Earlier this week, United Airlines CEO Scott Kirby sent a letter to employees saying that 3,000 employees had tested positive for COVID-19. On a single day at Newark, nearly a third of United's staff called out sick and the airline has cut back on scheduled flights systemwide.

Both airlines have about 74,000 workers.

Delta expects to lose money in January and February and for the first quarter as a whole. Revenue this quarter will likely be 72% to 74% of pre-pandemic levels, Delta said, about the same as the fourth quarter. Costs other than fuel will jump about 15% from 2019, and jet fuel is getting pricier too.

However, the Atlanta company expects to return to profitability in March — when spring break could help fill planes, especially if coronavirus infections are falling.

Several thousand hires are likely this year as Delta bounces back from the pandemic, Bastian said. The company set aside $108 million for special profit-sharing payments of $1,250 for each current employee.

The thank-you payment to employees comes as a new skirmish breaks out between largely non-union Delta and the nation's largest union of flight attendants. The union accuses Delta of pressuring employees to return to work too soon after contracting the virus.

Delta lobbied the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention last month to reduce the recommended quarantine period from 10 days to 5 days for vaccinated people who contract the virus, with Bastian and other Delta officials saying that the 10-day standard may significantly impact our workforce and operations."

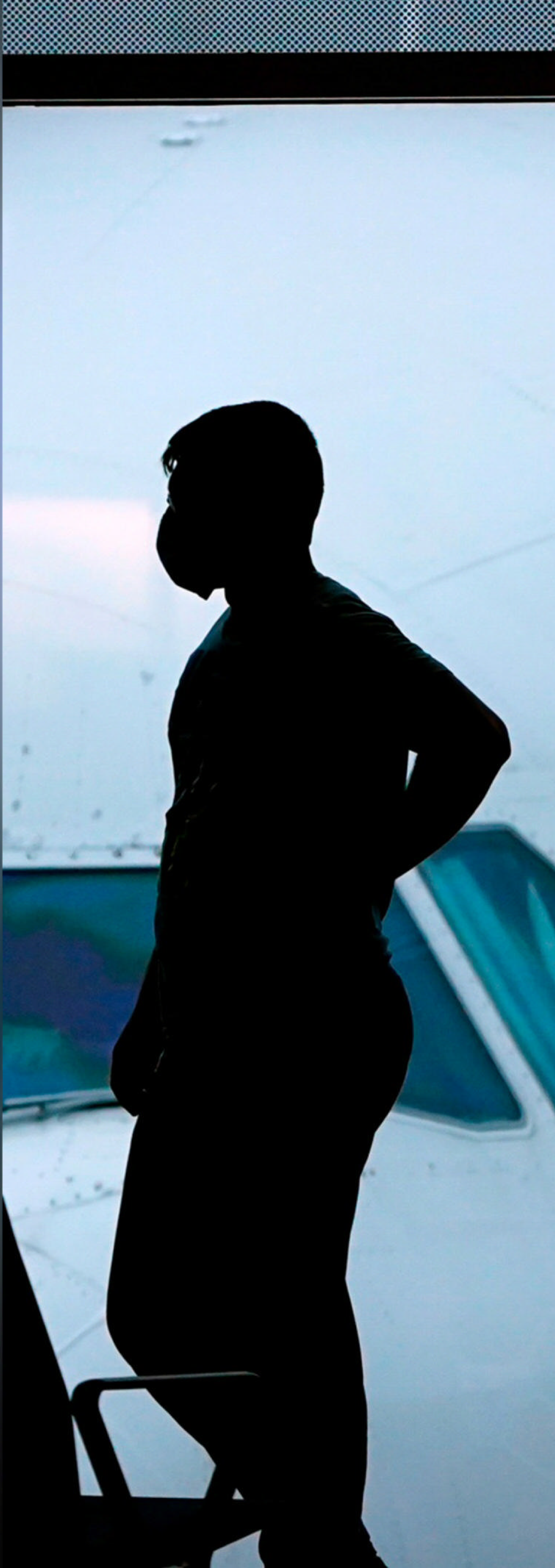
The CDC made the change, with its director, Rochelle Walensky, explaining on NPR that "we started to see challenges with ... airline flights and other areas."

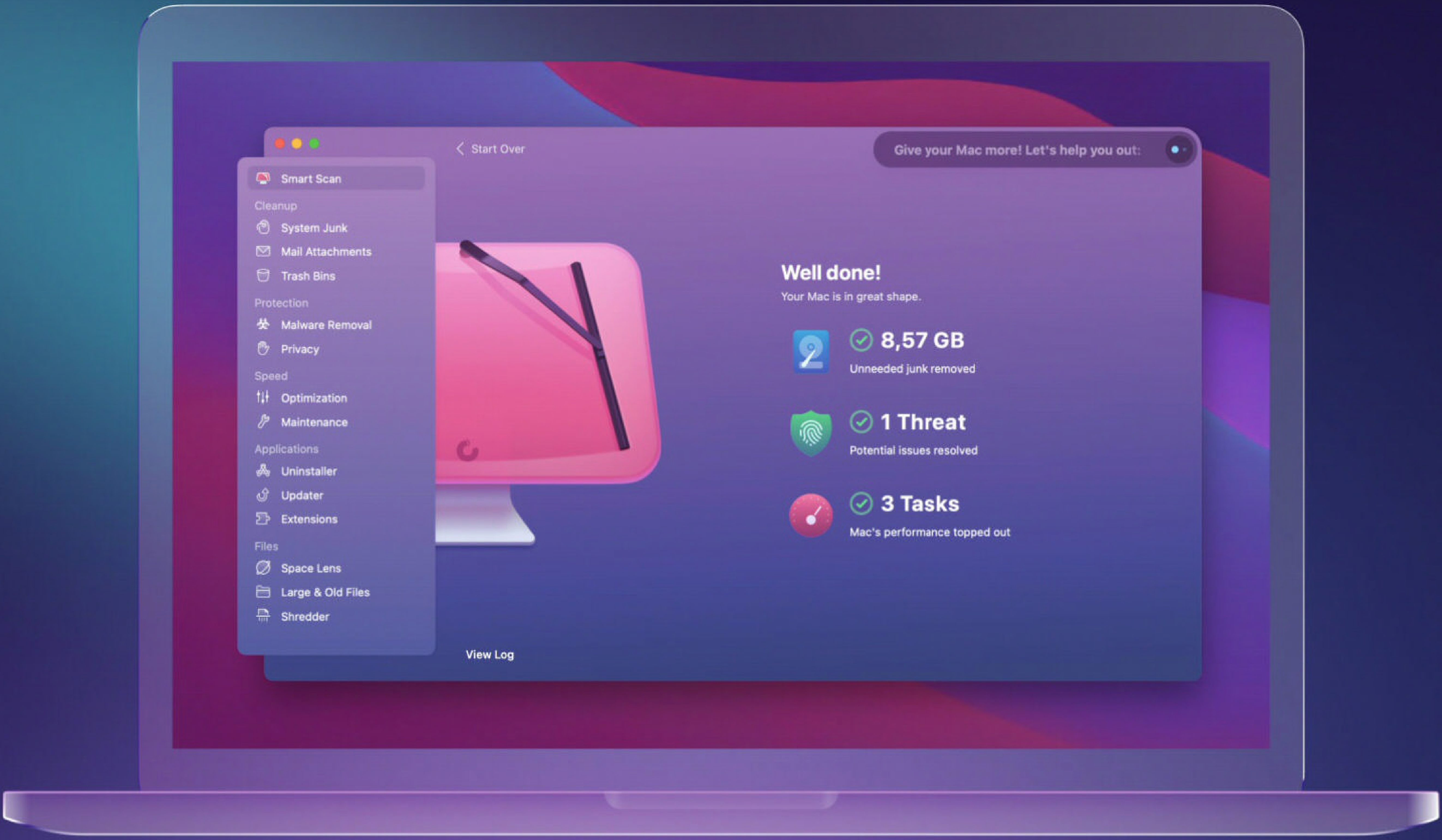
Delta's fourth-quarter loss compared with a profit of $1.1 billion in the same quarter before the pandemic.

Excluding losses on some investments and profit-sharing, Delta earned $170 million, or 22 cents per share. That easily topped per-share projections on Wall Street of 14 cents, according to a FactSet survey.

Revenue was $9.47 billion, down 17% from $11.44 billion in the fourth quarter of 2019, but well above the $9.02 billion predicted by industry analysts.

Shares of Delta Air Lines Inc. jumped almost 5% at the opening bell Thursday. All other major U.S. airlines rose strongly as did most of the travel industry with booking sites, hotels and cruise lines moving higher.

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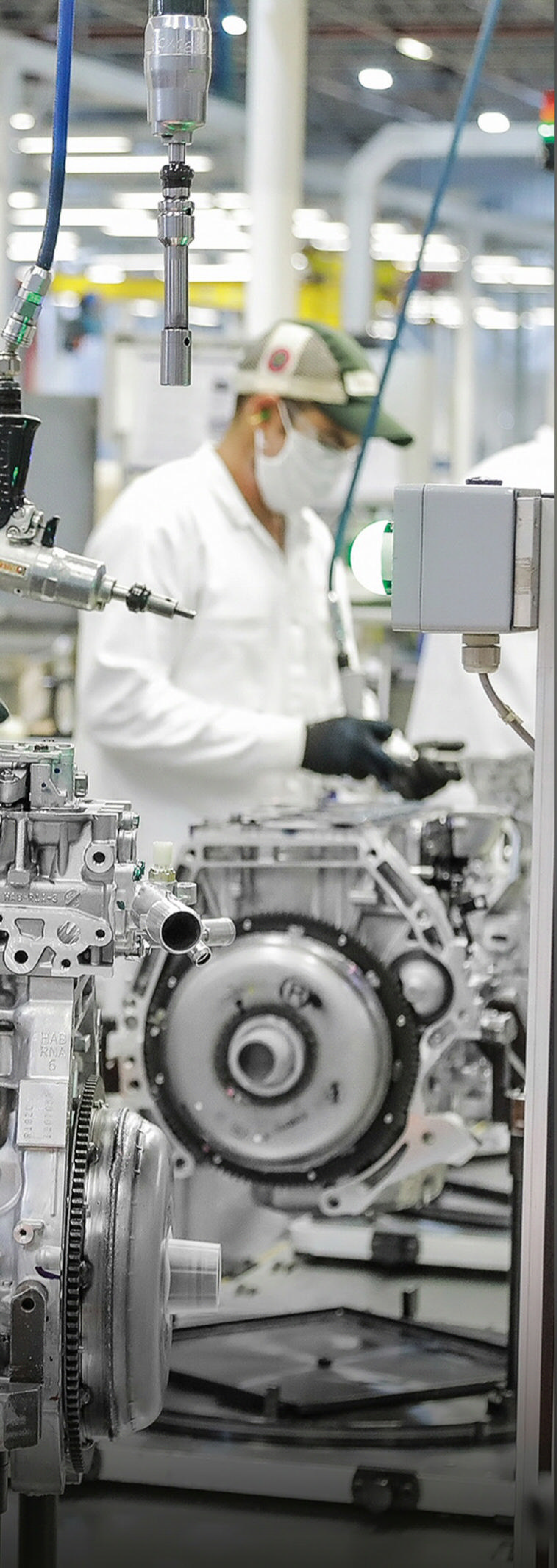
HONDA EXEC: HIGH AUTO PRICES MAY DROP, BUT NOT DRAMATICALLY

Honda expects its factories to make more vehicles this year despite a computer chip shortage and supply chain troubles. But because it's starting the year with so few vehicles at dealers, the company expects U.S. sales to fall below last year's numbers.

The company expects U.S. new vehicle prices to ease a bit from the record of more than $46,000 in December as automakers increase production, but Executive Vice President of National Operations Dave Gardner said prices won't fall to where they were before the pandemic.

A shortage of new vehicles brought on by the global chip shortage has forced Honda and other automakers to cut factory production at a time when demand is strong. That has crimped the supply of new vehicles, in some cases driving prices higher than the window sticker.



Honda, with its Acura luxury brand, expects to sell somewhere around 1.4 million vehicles in the U.S. this year, which would be short of last year's 1.47 million. Last year, the automaker started with 300,000 vehicles in its U.S. inventory. Today it has only about 20,000, Gardner said.

"I think we're expecting that we're going to be able to build more than we were last year, but the pipeline has been emptied to such a degree," he told reporters this week.

Analyst Jessica Caldwell says Honda's situation is typical of the rest of the U.S. industry. She expects production increases, but says automakers have 75% fewer vehicles on dealer lots than in a normal year. And many of those already have been sold.

As a result, people currently are paying an average of $700 over the sticker price for an average of $46,426. "I think that overage that we're seeing is probably going to come down," she said.

Gardner said Honda continues to see shortages of chips, and that ports are still clogged, slowing the flow of parts to the point that Honda has at times had to pay extra for air freight shipments. The omicron variant of the novel coronavirus also is starting to hit factory workers, affecting production, he said.

Honda also announced Wednesday that it will roll out an all-new HR-V subcompact SUV this year, followed by an all-new CR-V compact SUV, and a new Pilot larger SUV.

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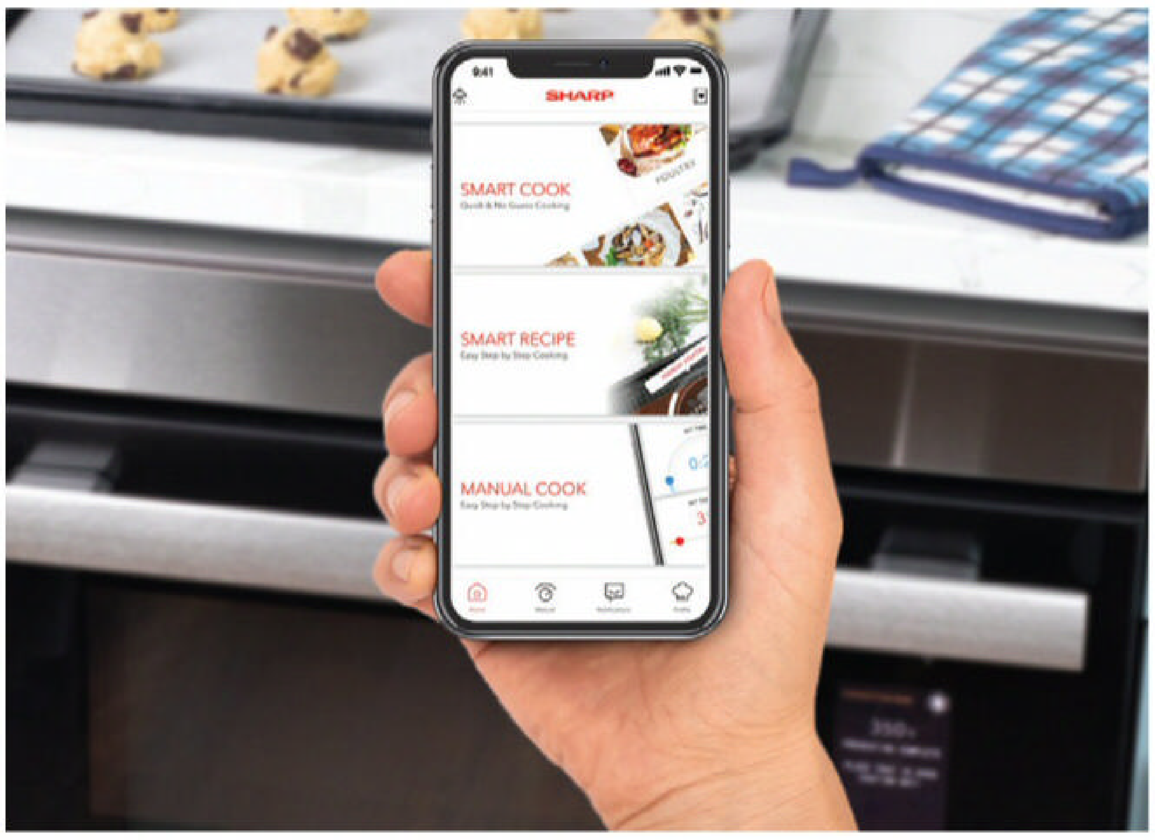

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INTERIOR TO HOLD AUCTION FOR OFFSHORE WIND POWER IN NY, NJ

The Biden administration said it will hold its first offshore wind auction next month, offering nearly 500,000 acres off the coast of New York and New Jersey for wind energy projects that could produce enough electricity to power nearly 2 million homes.

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said the Feb. 23 auction in the New York Bight region will allow offshore wind developers to bid on six lease areas, the most ever offered in an auction for offshore wind energy projects.

“The Biden-Harris administration has made tackling the climate crisis a centerpiece of our agenda, and offshore wind opportunities

MESSAGE
OF
GOVERNOR
KATHY HOCHUL
TO THE
LEGISLATURE
JANUARY 2022
OF THE STATE OF NE

Image: Hans Pennink

like the New York Bight present a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fight climate change and create good-paying, union jobs in the United States," Haaland said.

The auction comes after the administration announced a flurry of clean energy actions Wednesday, such as steps to speed up reviews of clean energy projects on public lands, including solar, onshore wind and geothermal energy. The Interior Department has approved 18 onshore projects during Biden's first year in office. The projects are set to deliver more than 4 gigawatts of clean energy, powering more than 1 million homes.

The administration also said it is accelerating the deployment of new transmission lines, as enabled by the new bipartisan infrastructure law, to make the grid more reliable and resilient in the face of intensifying extreme weather. Last year was the deadliest weather year for the contiguous United States since 2011, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Monday. A total of 688 people died in 20 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters that cost a combined $145 billion, the agency said.

President Joe Biden has set a goal to install 30 gigawatts of offshore wind power by 2030, generating enough electricity to power more than 10 million homes. The administration has approved the nation's first two commercial-scale offshore wind projects in federal waters: the 800-megawatt Vineyard Wind project off the Massachusetts coast and the 130-megawatt South Fork wind farm near New York's Long Island.

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Image: Michael Dwyer

Haaland has said the Interior Department hopes to conduct as many as seven offshore wind lease sales by 2025, including the New York Bight and sales offshore in the Carolinas and California later this year.

Democratic Govs. Kathy Hochul of New York and Phil Murphy of New Jersey hailed the New York Bight lease sale, saying it would help their states chart an ambitious path toward a clean energy economy. The projects there could produce up to 7 gigawatts of electricity.

"Today's milestone further highlights New York's commitment to reaching its offshore wind goals,"Hochul said in a statement.

"Offshore wind holds the tremendous promise for our future in terms of climate change, economic growth and job creation," Murphy added. "New Jersey is already committed to creating nearly one-quarter of the nation's offshore wind-generation market and these transformative projects are proof that climate action can drive investments in infrastructure and manufacturing while creating good-paying, union jobs."

The administration's announcement rankled some commercial fishing groups, who have complained that wind projects off the East Coast could interfere with efforts to catch seafood species such as scallops, clams and sea bass. Annie Hawkins, executive director of Responsible Offshore Development Alliance, a group representing fishing associations and companies, said the Biden administration has been moving offshore wind projects at a "staggering" pace, with insufficient environmental reviews or public comment.

Image: Merrily Cassidy

Image: Scott Eisen

“The NY Bight is a hugely conflicted area,” Hawkins said, referring to a variety of fishing, shipping and other ocean uses. “Issuing new leases before putting processes in place to mitigate the clear risks this scale of development poses to historic food production and ecological resilience will result in devastating impacts that would have been largely avoidable with careful planning,” she said in an emailed statement.

The Interior Department said it consulted with commercial fisheries and other stakeholders before moving forward with the lease sale, resulting in a 72% reduction in the size of the proposed lease area. The closest distance to New Jersey among the parcels is 27 nautical miles offshore, while the nearest to New York is 20 nautical miles away, the department said.

Amanda Lefton, director of Interior’s Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, said her agency will require that the six leases be awarded to six separate developers, ensuring “a robust set of operators” and spurring competition on price and other factors.

The project carries several stipulations, including required project labor agreements with unions and planned incentives for using U.S.-made components such as blades, turbines and foundations.

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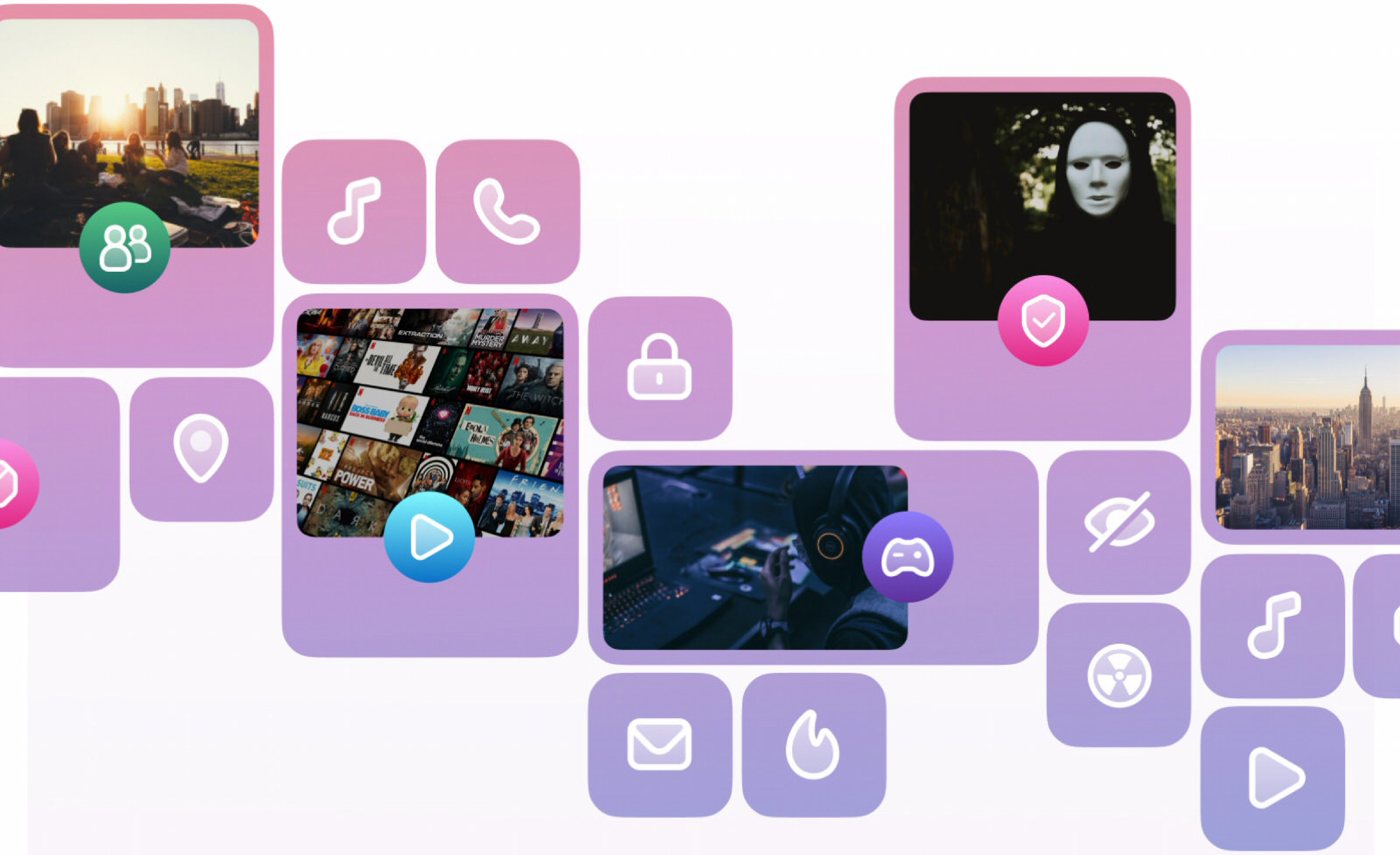

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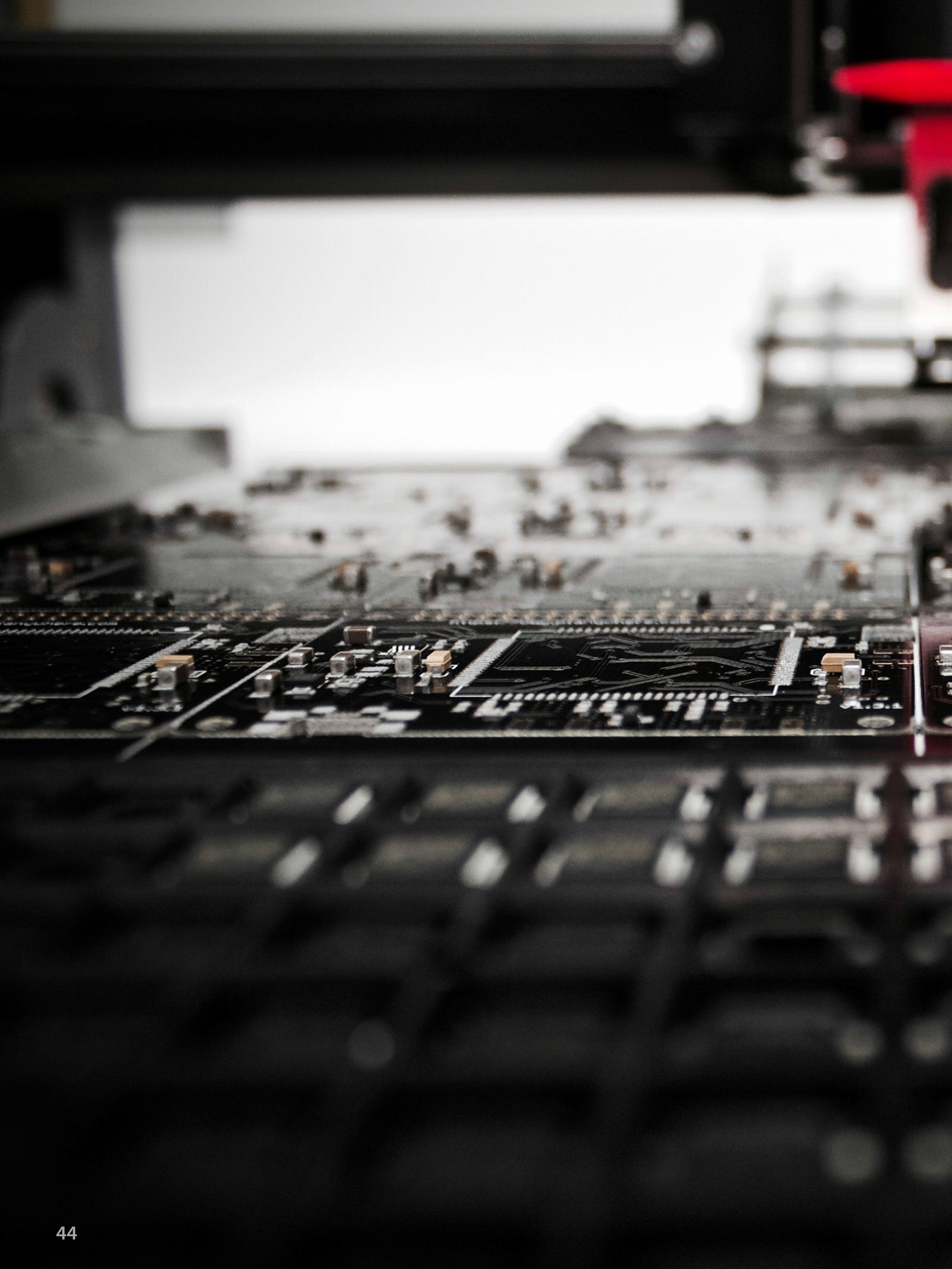
TAIWAN CHIPMAKER TSMC SAYS QUARTERLY PROFIT $6 BILLION

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., the biggest contract manufacturer of processor chips, reported Thursday its quarterly profit rose 16.4% over a year earlier to $6 billion amid surging demand for chips for smartphones and other electronics.

Revenue in the final three months of 2021 rose 21.2% to 438.2 billion New Taiwan dollars ($15.8 billion), TSMC announced. Profit was 166.2 billion New Taiwan dollars.

TSMC, headquartered in Hsinchu, Taiwan, makes processor chips for major brands including Apple Inc. and Qualcomm Inc.

Image: Chiang Ying-ying



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Chipmakers have benefited from demand for next-generation telecoms, high-performance computing and chips for use in products from cars to medical devices.

TSMC announced plans last year to invest $100 billion over the next three years in manufacturing and research and development.

Most semiconductors used in smartphones, medical equipment, computers and other products are made in Taiwan, South Korea and China.

TSMC announced plans in October to build its first chip factory in Japan. The company and Sony Corp. later said they would jointly invest $7 billion in the facility.

Outside Taiwan, TSMC also operates a semiconductor wafer fabrication facility in Camas, Washington, and design centers in San Jose, California, and Austin, Texas.

The company has announced plans for a second U.S. production site in Arizona as concern grows over American reliance on sources in Asia for high-tech components.

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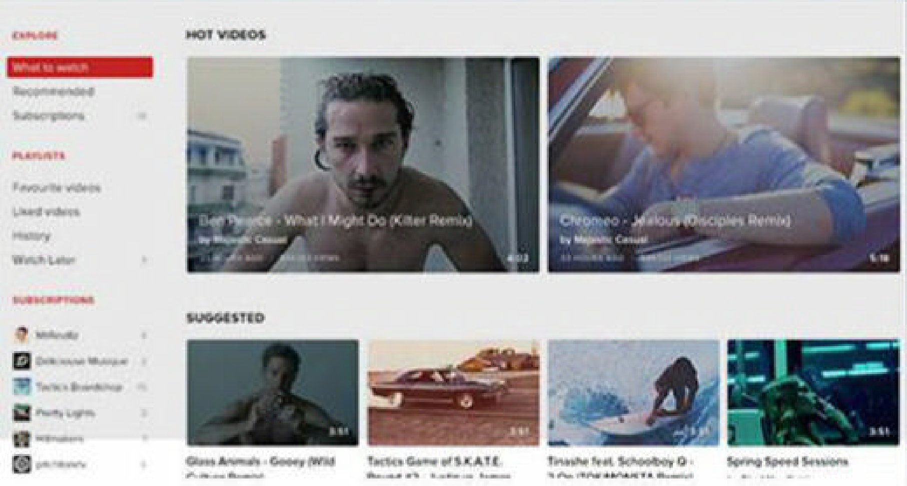

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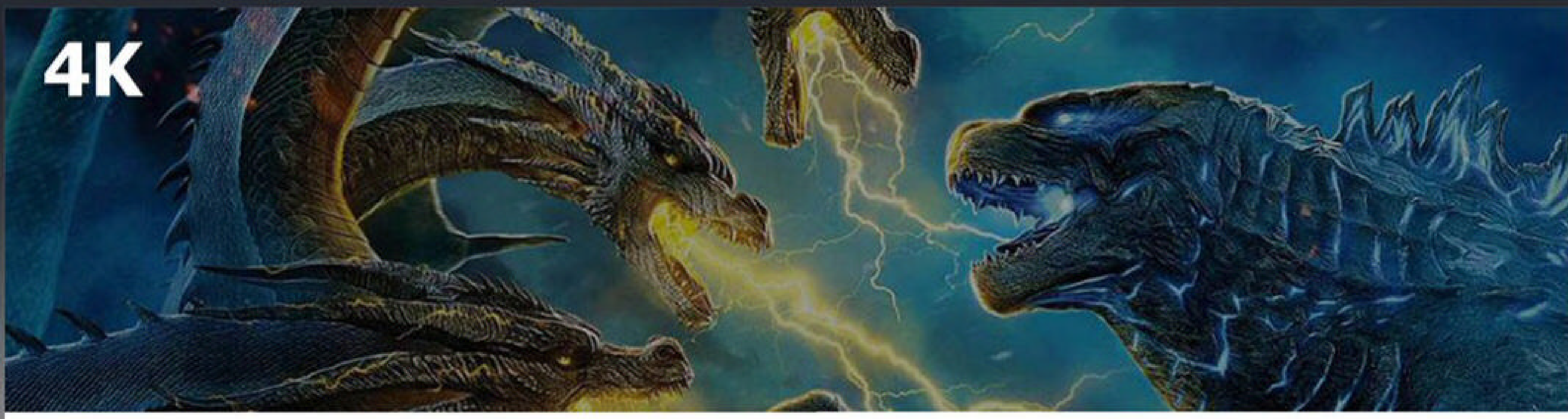

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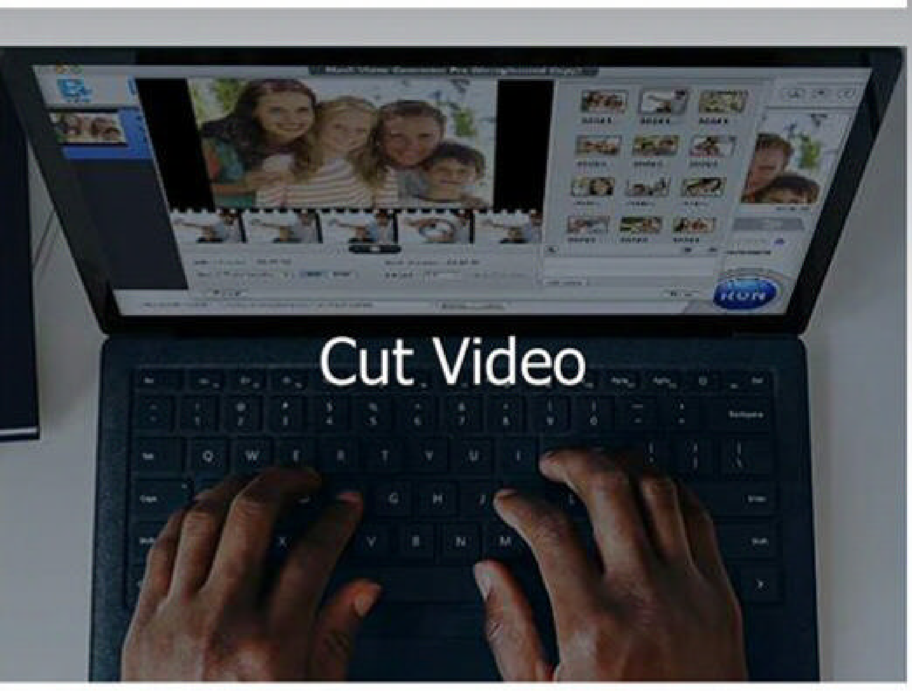

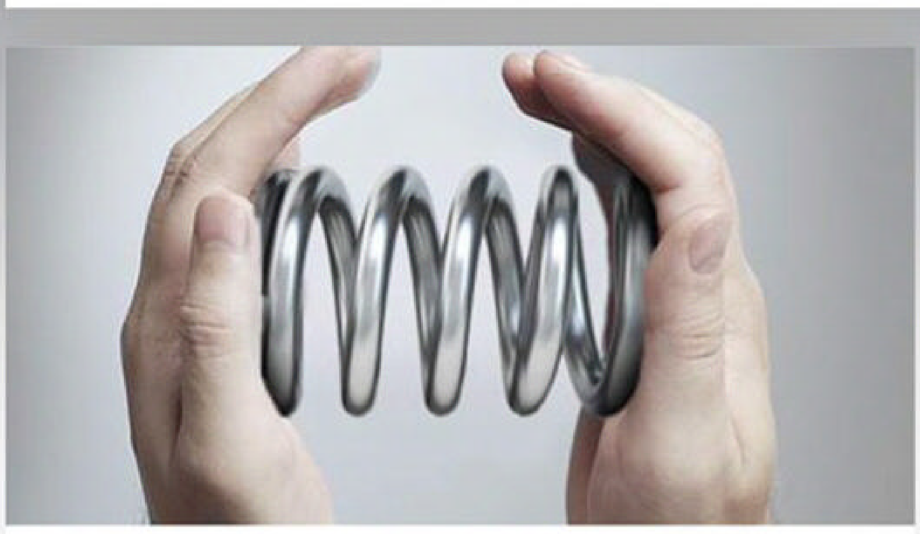

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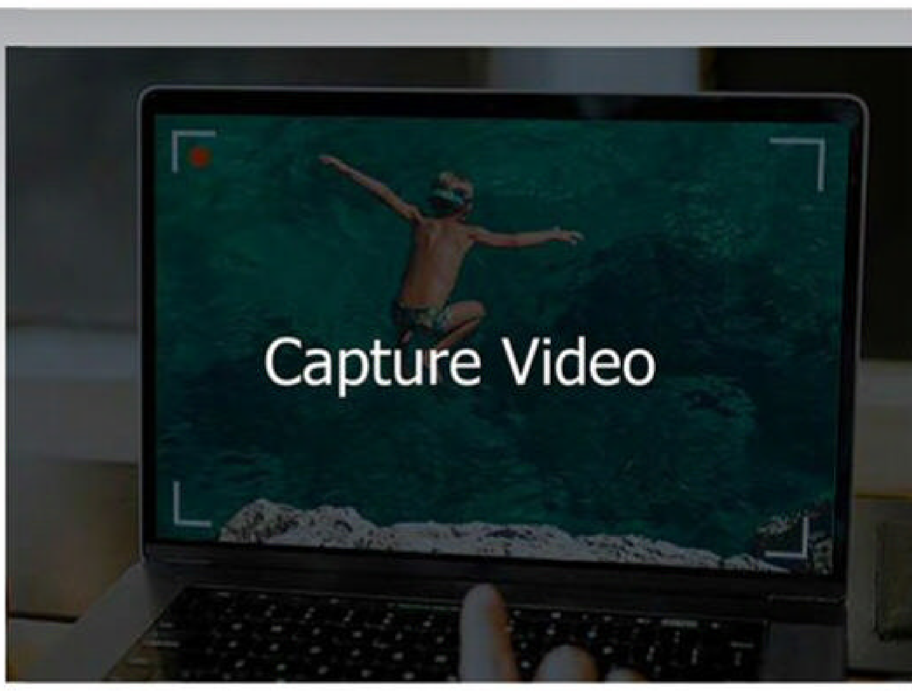

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SURVEY: PARENTS INCREASED QUALITY TIME AT PANDEMIC'S START

During the first several months of the pandemic in the U.S., Dina Levy made her young daughter and son go on walks with her three times a day.

They kicked a soccer ball around at the nearby high school. The children, then 11 and 8, created an obstacle course out of chalk and the three timed each other running through it. They also ate all their meals together.

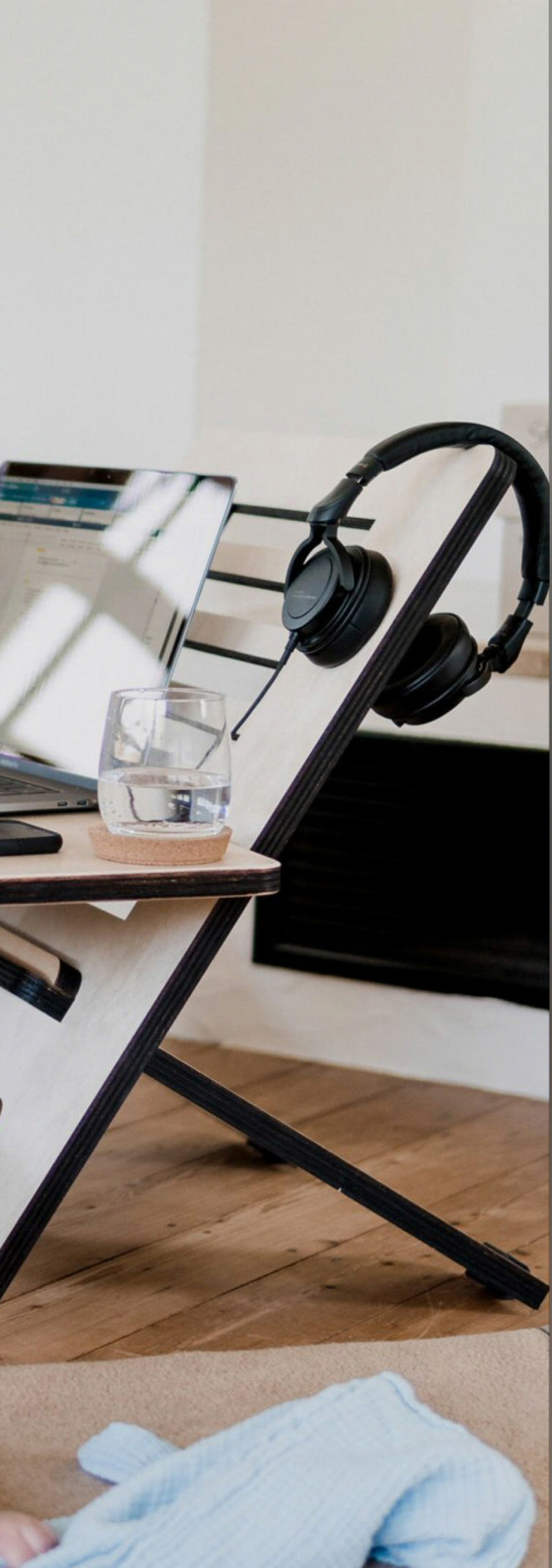
Levy is among scores of parents who indicated in a new survey from the U.S. Census Bureau that they spent more time eating, reading and playing with their children from March 2020 to June of 2020, when coronavirus-lockdowns were at their most intense, than they had in previous years.

"With school and work, you split up and go your own way for the day, but during coronavirus, we were a unit," said Levy, an attorney who lives in New Jersey. "It really was, I don't want to say worthwhile since this pandemic has been so awful for so many people, but there was a lot of value to us as a family."

In a report on the survey released this week, the Census Bureau includes some caveats: A large number of people did not respond. Also, compared to previous years, more of the parents in this survey were older, foreign-born, married, educated and above the poverty level. The survey also does not measure the long-term impact of the pandemic, which is now entering its third calendar year, so it is unknown whether the increased time with the children has stuck.

The findings of the Survey of Income and Program Participation are based on interviews with one parent from 22,000 households during the first four months of the pandemic in the U.S. The survey found that the proportion of meals the so-called reference parents shared with their children increased from 84% to 85% from 2018 to 2020, and from 56% to 63% for the other parents.

Some parents also read to their kids more in 2020 compared to previous years, though there were variations based on income, education and other factors. In 2020, 69% of parents



reported reading to young children five or more times per week compared with 65% in 2018, and 64% in 2019, the report said.

"Families knew before the pandemic that they were overstressed. Kids had so many places to be. Parents were juggling an awful lot," Froma Walsh, co-director of the Chicago Center for Family Health at the University of Chicago, said in a phone interview. "The pandemic made people not go to work, and our kids were home. It really helped parents to say, 'Hey, wait a minute. We are able to have real family time together that we weren't before.'"

On the flip side, the report found that outings with children decreased for parents because of travel restrictions and lockdowns, dropping from 85% in 2018 and 87% in 2019 to 82% in 2020. The drop was starkest for solo parents, going from 86% in 2019 to 75% in 2020, according to the survey.

The pandemic also strained many families. The death of loved ones, job losses, financial worries, remote learning, social isolation, and the demands of child and elder care all took a heavy toll, Walsh said.

"The key point is families have experienced extreme stress and strain over the course of this prolonged pandemic," Walsh said. She said her research shows that families do best when they share positive values, take a creative approach to problem-solving and have the flexibility to adapt.

"Those families that can pull together and practice resilience are doing well, and it actually strengthens their bonds," she said.

That was certainly the case for Eugene Brusilovskiy, a statistician living in suburban Philadelphia. He said the pandemic allowed him to be with his daughter, who was born during the early months of the virus's spread. Since he was working from home, he and his wife decided not to put her in day care as originally planned.

"I was involved in every routine, everything from feeding her to changing her diapers," Brusilovskiy said. "I was able to spend real quality time, to go on walks and watch all of those first milestones that I wouldn't have been able to do otherwise."

Although many people are limiting their activities now with the omicron-driven resurgence of the coronavirus, it's possible that once schools reopened in 2021 and kids

returned to their extracurricular pursuits, parents fell back into earlier habits, said Melissa Milkie, a University of Toronto sociologist.

"Still, some families might have experienced eating more dinners together and reading as something they pushed to 'keep' even beyond those early months of the pandemic," Milkie said.

For Levy, the downside of all the meals with her kids was the intense cleanup.

"It drove me crazy," she said. "It was tons and tons of dirty dishes."

Still, that wasn't enough to diminish the once-in-a-lifetime sense of togetherness she was able to forge with her children.

"It was time we had never spent together," Levy said, "and probably never will again."

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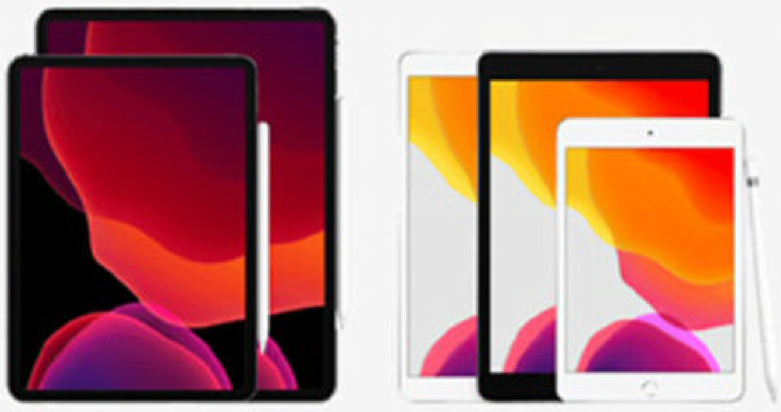

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BOEING AIRLINER SALES JUMP BUT DELIVERIES LAG RIVAL AIRBUS

N7968
N7972

Boeing finished 2021 far behind European rival Airbus in deliveries of new aircraft, but sales bounced back after two dismal years caused by the 737 Max crashes and the pandemic.

Boeing said that it delivered 38 commercial planes in December and 340 for all of 2021, nearly double the total for 2020.

However, Airbus reported that it made 611 deliveries in 2021, topping Boeing for a third straight year. Boeing was hindered by production flaws that prevented shipments of its 787 Dreamliner for most of 2021.

Deliveries are bigger than bragging rights — they are an important source of cash for the companies because airlines typically pay a large portion of the purchase price when they take possession of a new plane.

Boeing also said that orders jumped to their highest level since 2018, before the grounding of the 737 Max and the pandemic caused sales to plummet for two years.

The Chicago company reported landing orders for 80 planes in December and 909 for the full year. After subtracting cancellations, however, Boeing posted 479 net orders, slightly behind the Airbus total of 507.

Boeing reported another 2021 figure of 535 orders by including 56 sales that it once considered unlikely to be completed but now views with more certainty. However, a spokesman said some of those orders were placed in earlier years. Because Boeing and Airbus backlogs are so big, airlines usually have to wait several years to get all the planes they order.

There is no question that the competition between the world's two big aircraft manufacturers has heated up after being lopsided in Airbus' favor for a time.

Boeing scored a coup last week when it landed a big order from Allegiant Air, which currently has an all-Airbus fleet. Last month, it was Airbus raiding Boeing customers by winning commitments for new orders from Air France-KLM and Australia's Qantas.

The accelerating pace of orders at both companies indicates that airlines are confident of strong demand and believe that the pandemic will subside — or travelers will decide to live with the risk of COVID-19 and resume flying anyway.

Neither Boeing nor Airbus gave any insight into how current orders and deliveries will affect their bottom lines.

Boeing will report 2021 financial results on Jan. 26.

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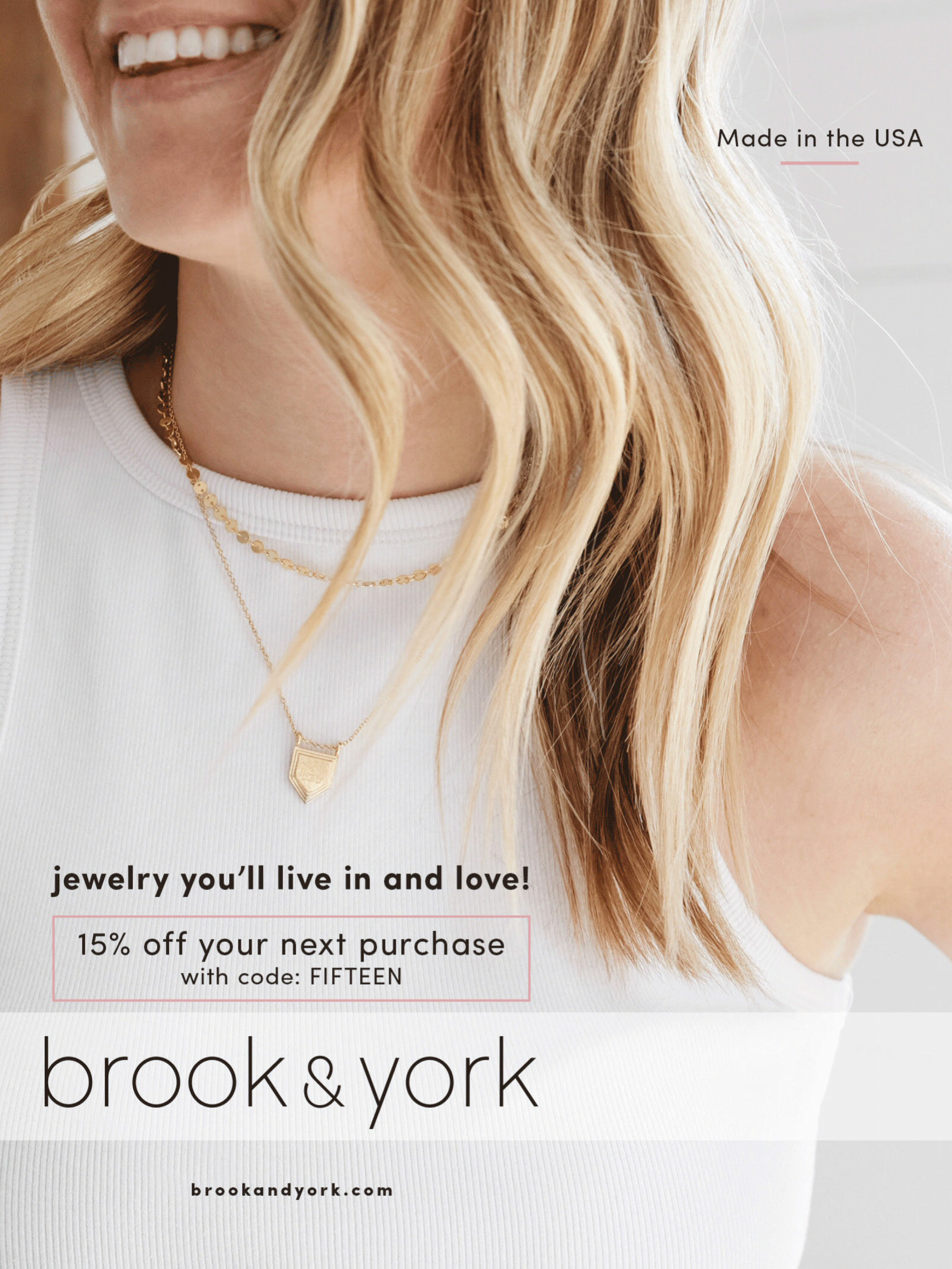

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iMac Pro

Rumored to be last piece of the Silicon migration

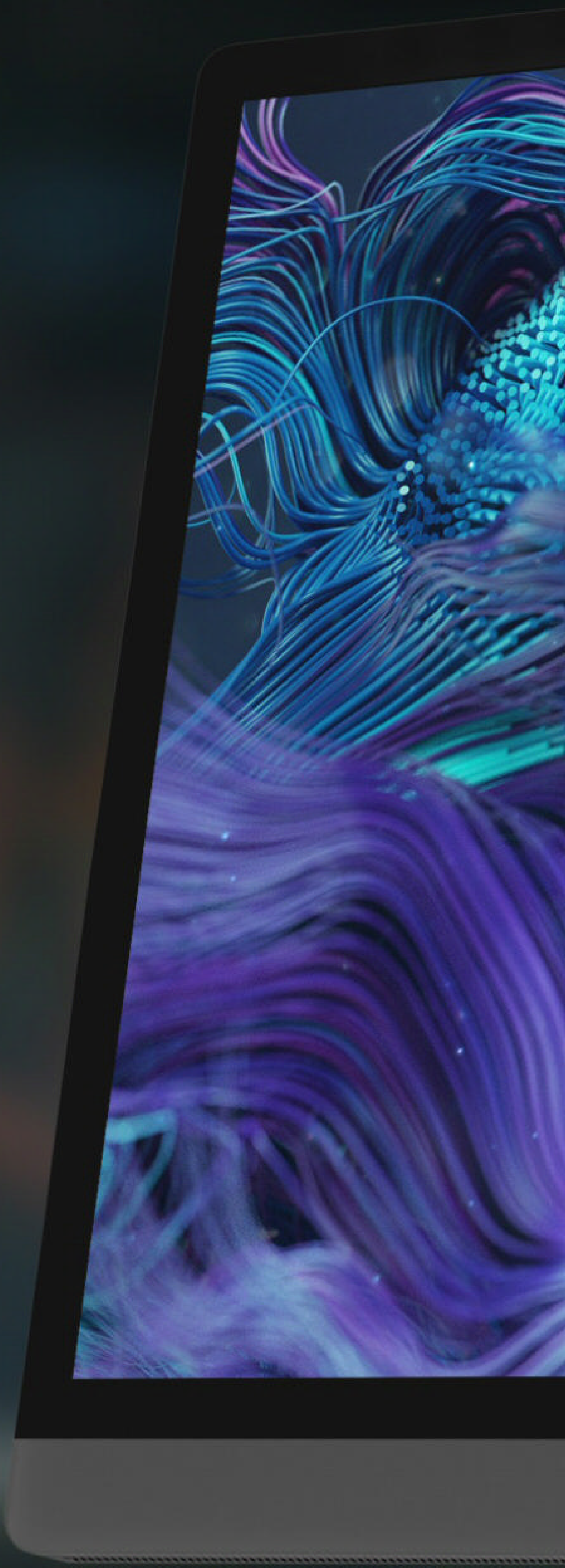

Image: Concept design | Mockups

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2021 was a big year for Mac. With huge innovations across the iMac and MacBook range, Apple pushed ahead with its transition to custom silicon chips, offering record-breaking performance. The last piece of the puzzle is the 27-inch iMac, and with rumors suggesting Apple will give the device the Pro moniker, good things could be just around the corner.

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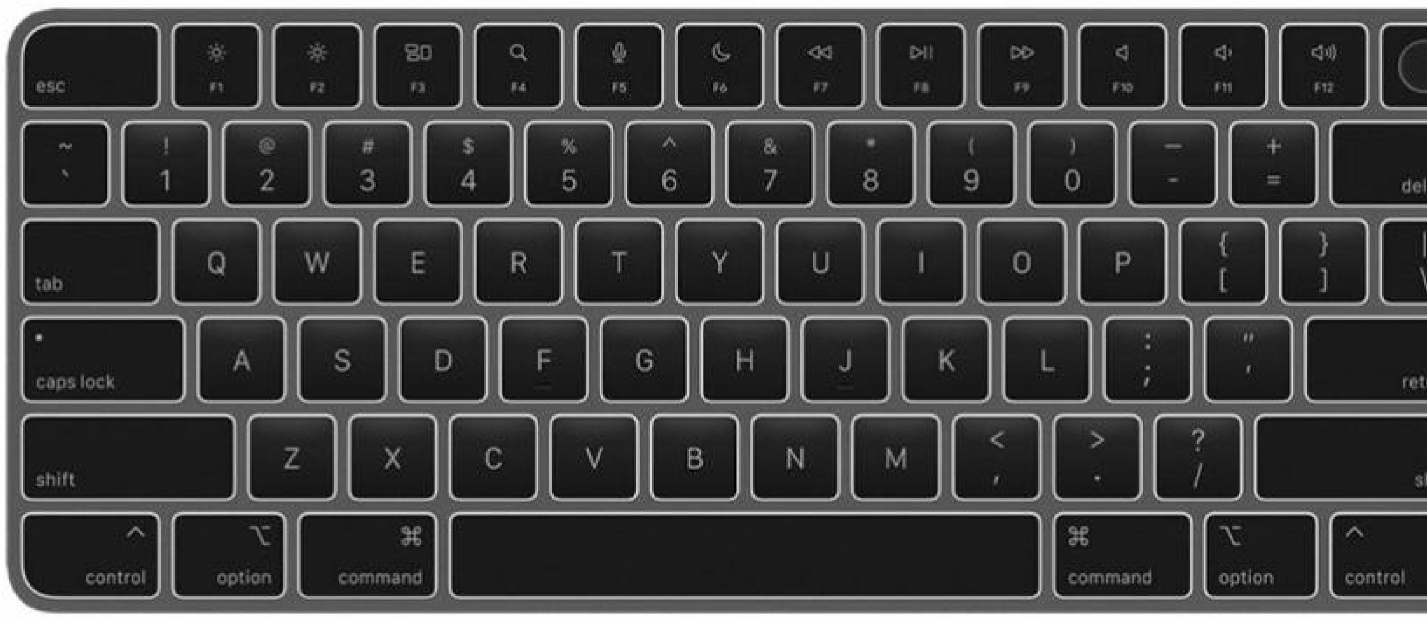
MacBook Pro



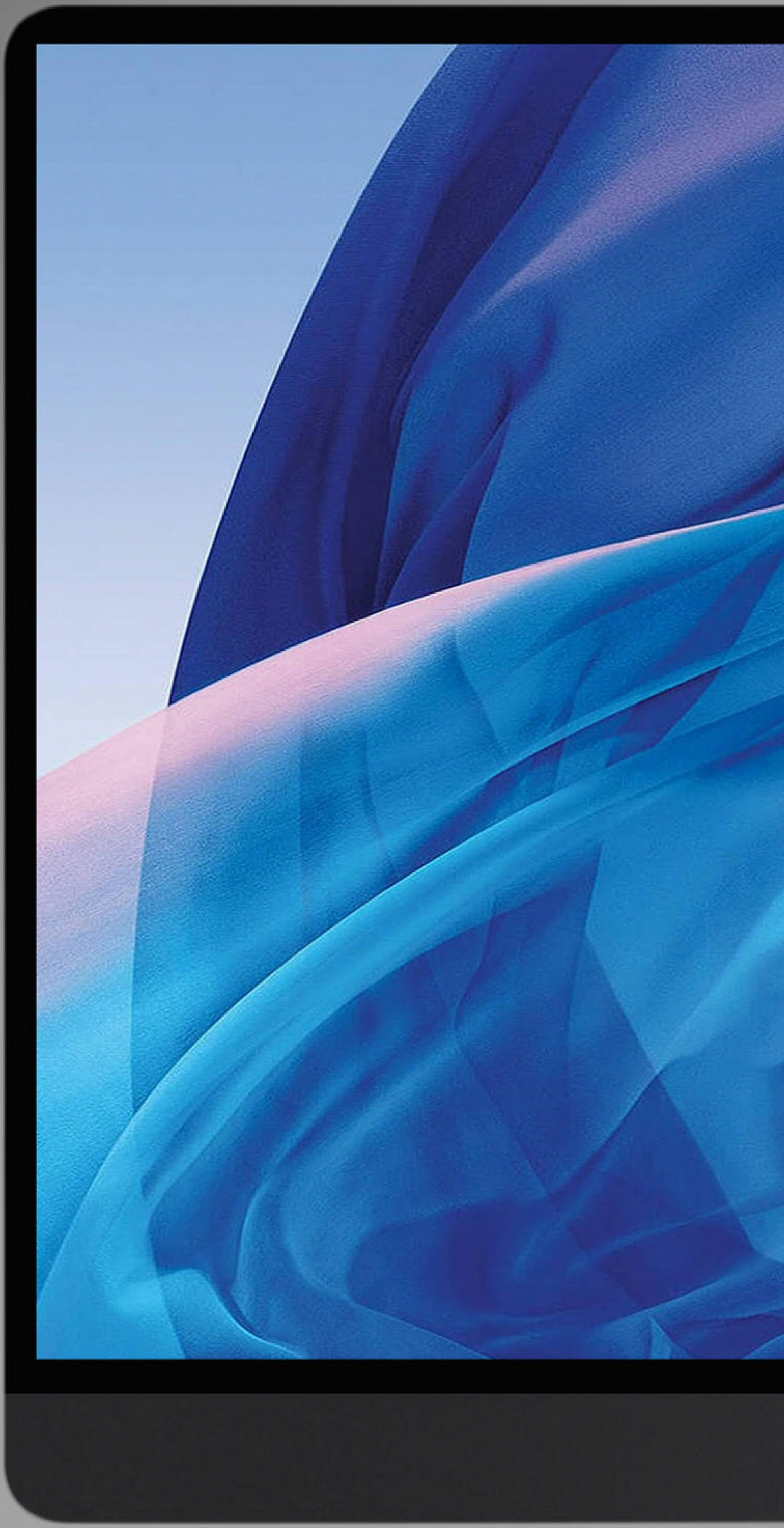
PUTTING THE PRO INTO THE iMAC

Apple's discontinued iMac Pro launched as a standalone product back in 2017, and although it sported a stunning space gray design that set the professional world alight, it failed to take off due to its excessive price tag - and as a result, the company discontinued the device last March. However, as the rumor mill begins to go into overdrive, many are suggesting that the name will live on, with Apple's long-awaited 27-inch iMac set to be given a new look as well as a new Pro name to differentiate from the more affordable 24-inch model, which received an overhaul last year with a consumer-facing design in iconic Mac colors. The smaller model was released in April of last year and received positive feedback, **though its design was**

criticized for being too garish and colorful - a stark contrast to Apple's usual space gray and silver iMac chassis.

With the new 27-inch iMac **reportedly** moving towards production in the middle of December, it's now widely expected that Apple will release the new model in the first half of 2022, and the news could perhaps come as soon as March or April at the company's spring event. The new model is expected to adopt a similar design language to the 24-inch iMac and serve as a mix between the new iMac model and the Pro Display XDR, according to insider Dylandkt. It's thought that the model will sport black bezels, different than the iMac's white bezels, and the bezels will be much slimmer and feature less of a bottom 'chin' than the 24-inch model.

Like with the 24-inch variant, the new 27-inch model is likely to be sold in a number of color options to boost sales and encourage consumers to express their individuality. Though some had expected Apple to keep to its traditional colorings for the professional high-end model, as it has done with the iPad Pro and MacBook Pro, a report from DigiTimes suggests that Apple is planning to sell the new model in various color options. There are no specifics on which colors Apple will choose, but with the model expected to feature black bezels, the chances are that we won't be seeing bright yellow or green iMac Pros. Instead, Apple will likely stick to darker shades such as Space Gray, Blue, Silver, and perhaps a new Midnight-Green color option, the same color that was used for the iPhone 11 Pro models. Of course, speculation on design is based on nothing more than rumors we've seen circulating online, and the chances are that Apple will pull something out of the bag and do it differently.



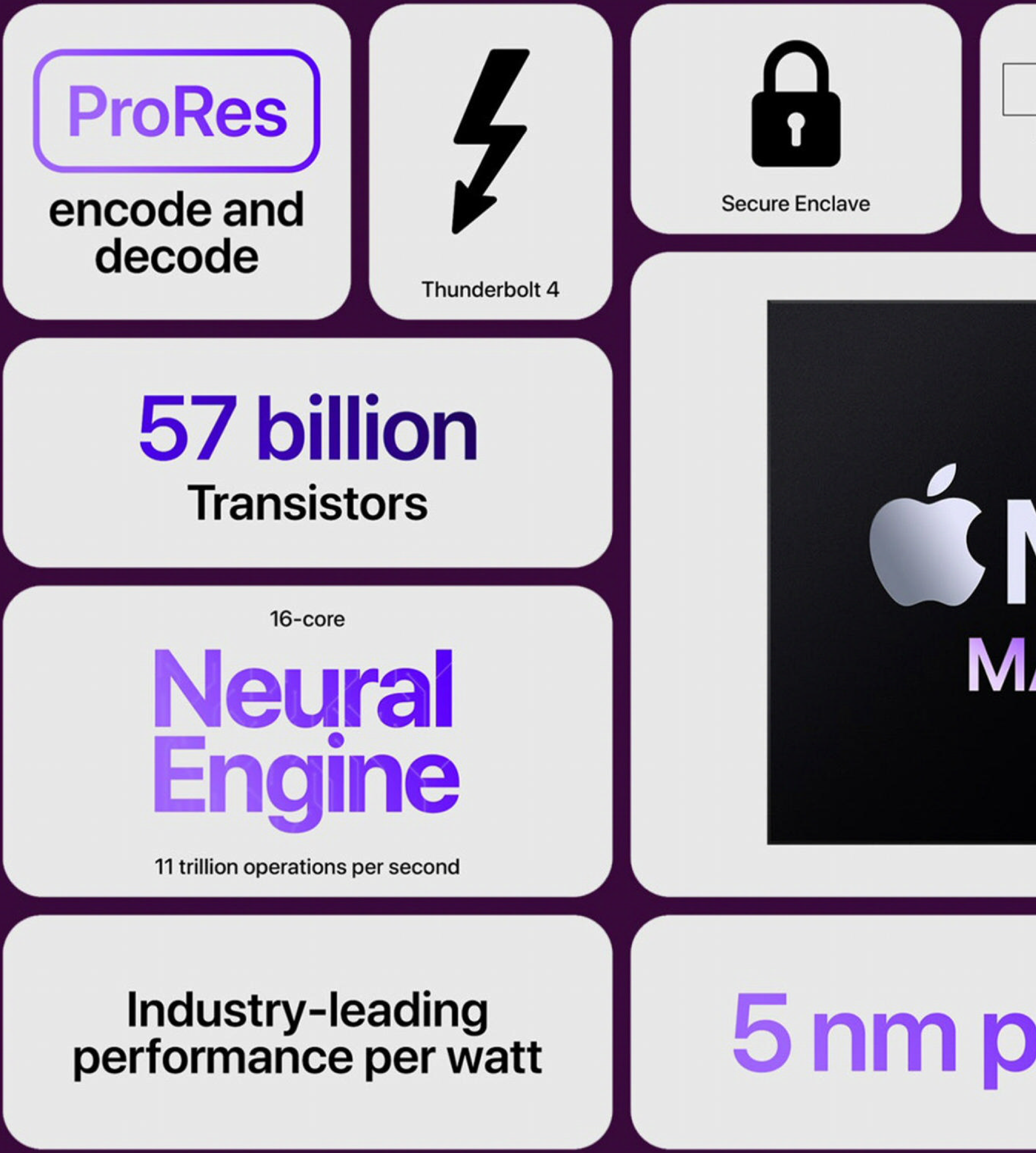
DESIGNED FOR PROFESSIONALS

Although the chassis of the new iMac Pro is what gets people talking, it's the design and new elements that will no doubt keep the iMac Pro at the top of professionals' wishlists. It's all-but-confirmed that the new iMac Pro will feature a mini-LED display, like the 2021 MacBook Pro models did, to offer brighter colors and deeper blacks, as well as improved HDR and ProMotion display technology, which would support 120Hz refresh rates for the first time on an iMac. Although the iMac Pro probably won't quite be able to compete with the Pro Display XDR, a 120Hz refresh rate would allow for improved

scrolling and animations on the Mac, as well as make the Mac better for gameplay. A sketchy report has even suggested that Apple could introduce a display that's larger than 27 inches to counter Apple's decision to boost the 21.5-inch iMac to 24-inch, so we could **potentially see a stunning 32-inch iMac display for the first time.**

Insiders have also suggested that Apple has been testing Face ID for the MacBook Pro, but according to Dylandkt, it's currently 'touch and go' as to whether it'll be included. If Apple doesn't think it's ready, the chances are a Touch ID button would be added to the Magic Keyboard as it was to the 24-inch model. Apple could even choose to add backlit keys to the wireless keyboard for the first time and introduce MagSafe to the Magic Mouse under a new third-generation. If we're thinking about features we'd like to see Apple add to the new iMac, proximity charging could be used to keep the keyboard and mouse at 100% battery.

Apple gave professional users everything that they wanted when they launched the new MacBook Pro at the end of 2021, and when it comes to the desktop equivalent, the iMac Pro will likely also offer the same. Apple is expected to offer the same similar port configuration to the new MacBook Pro, with USB-C/Thunderbolt ports, an SD card slot, and an HDMI port. It's also thought that an Ethernet port could be built into the power adapter of the new Mac to accommodate the thinner screen, and combined this would make it the most powerful iMac to date, offering everything professional users wanted in an all-in-one powerhouse machine.



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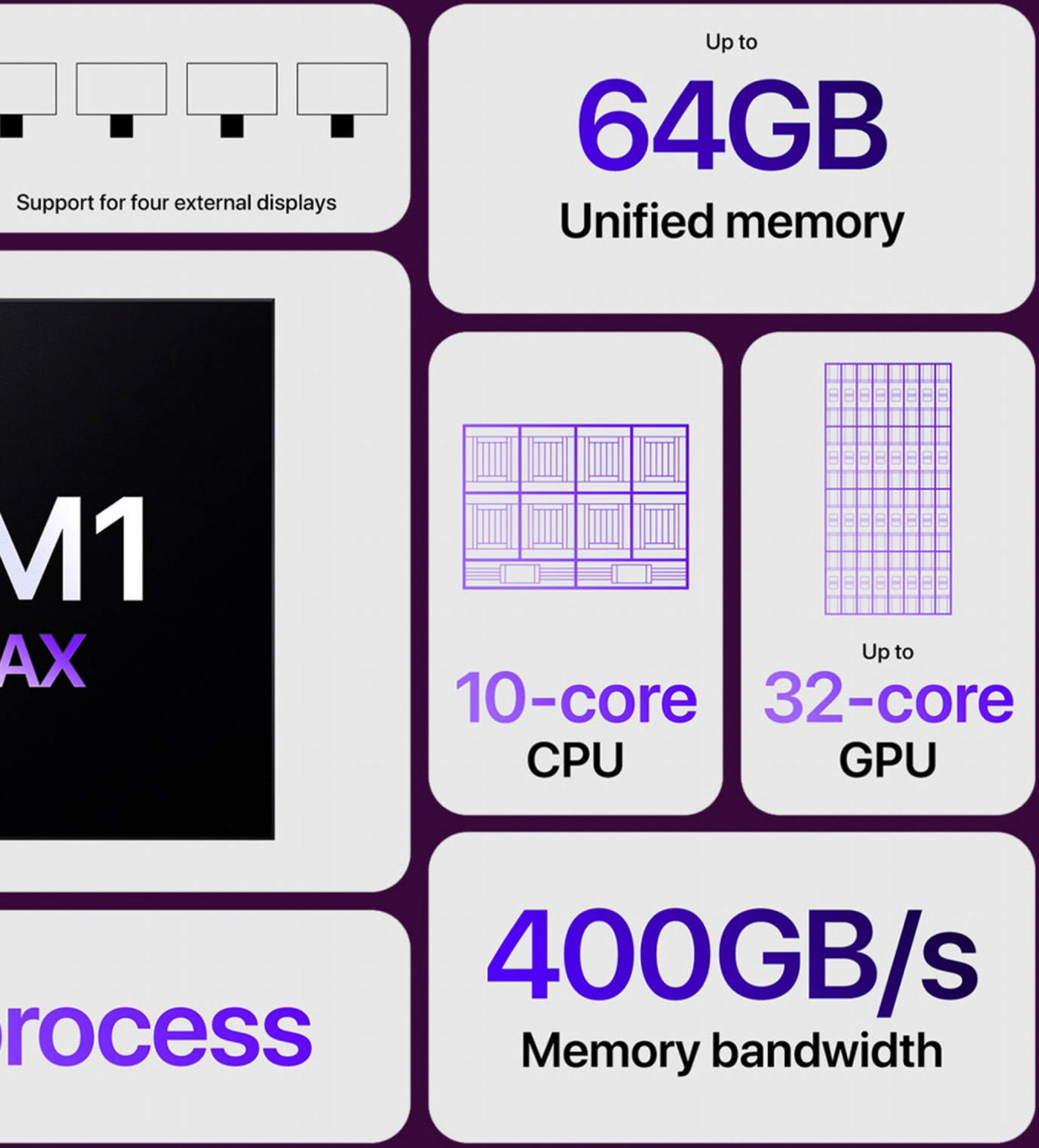
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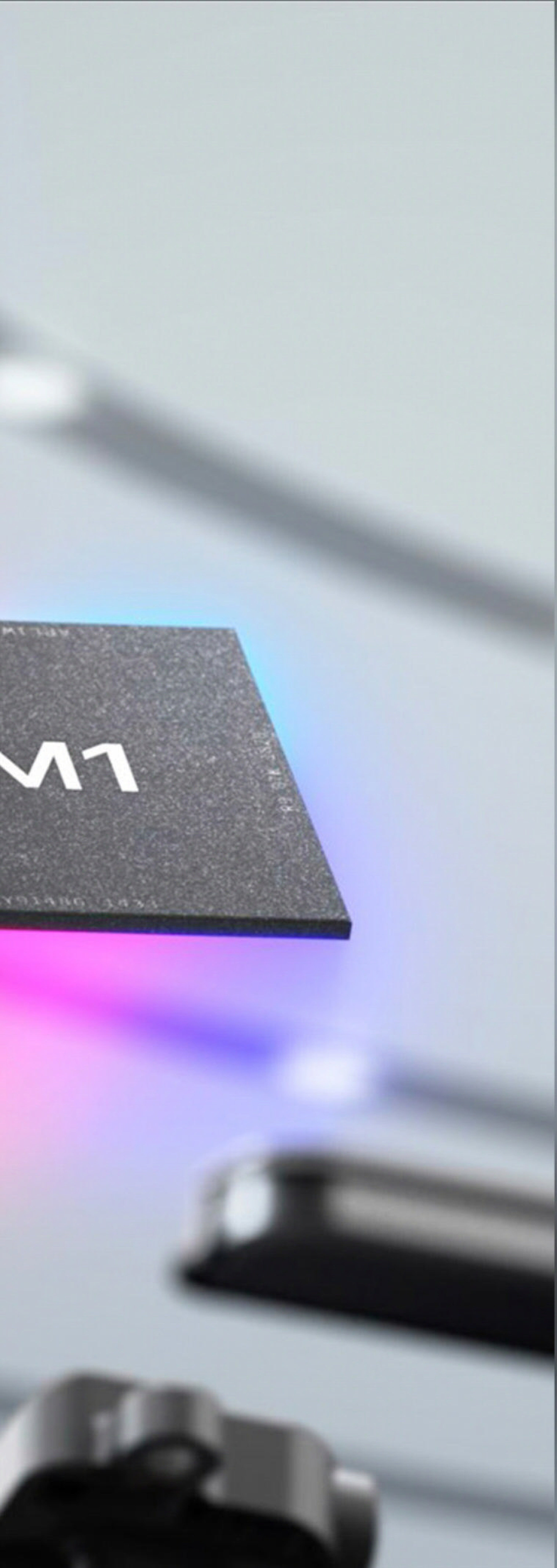
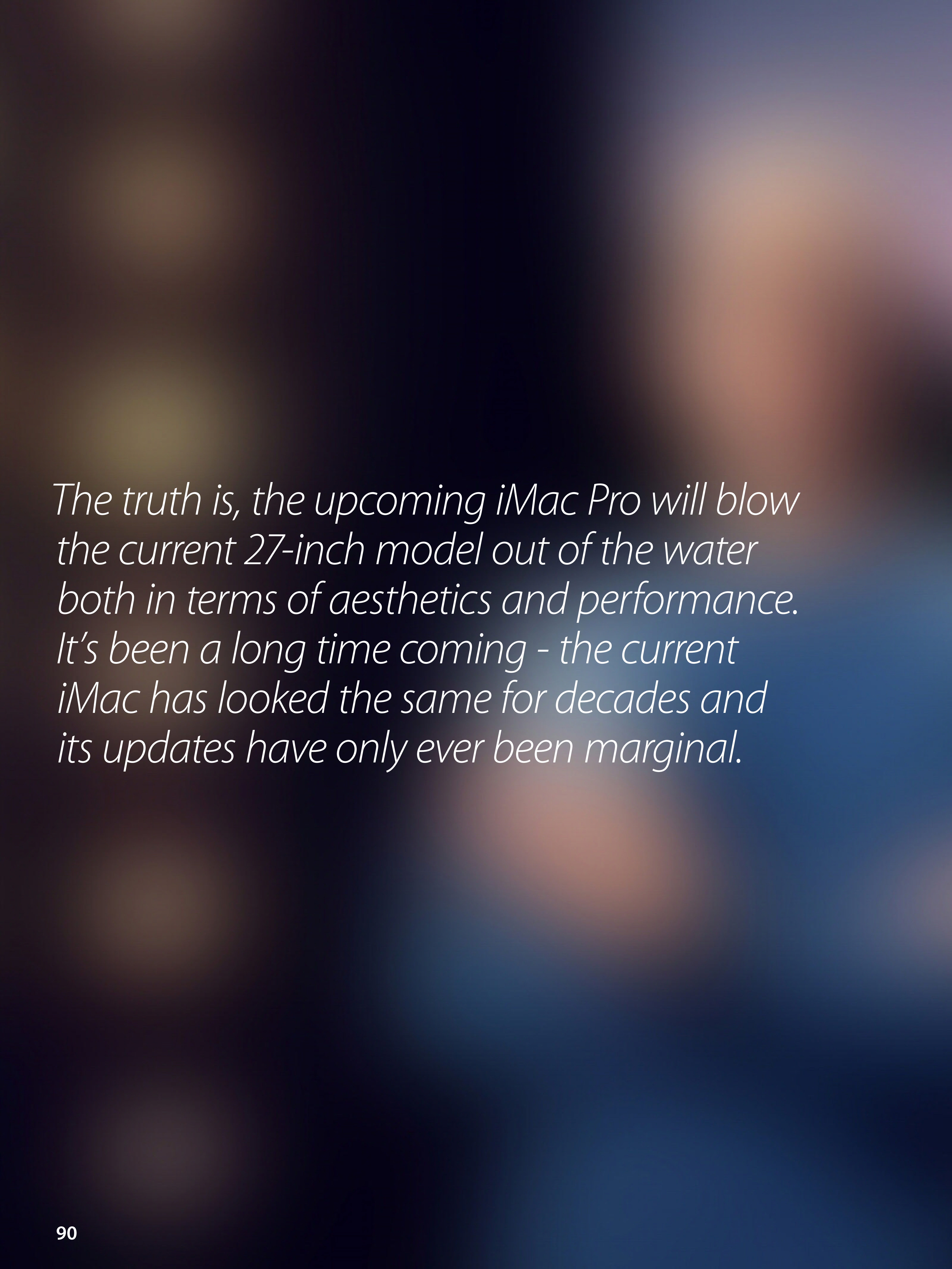


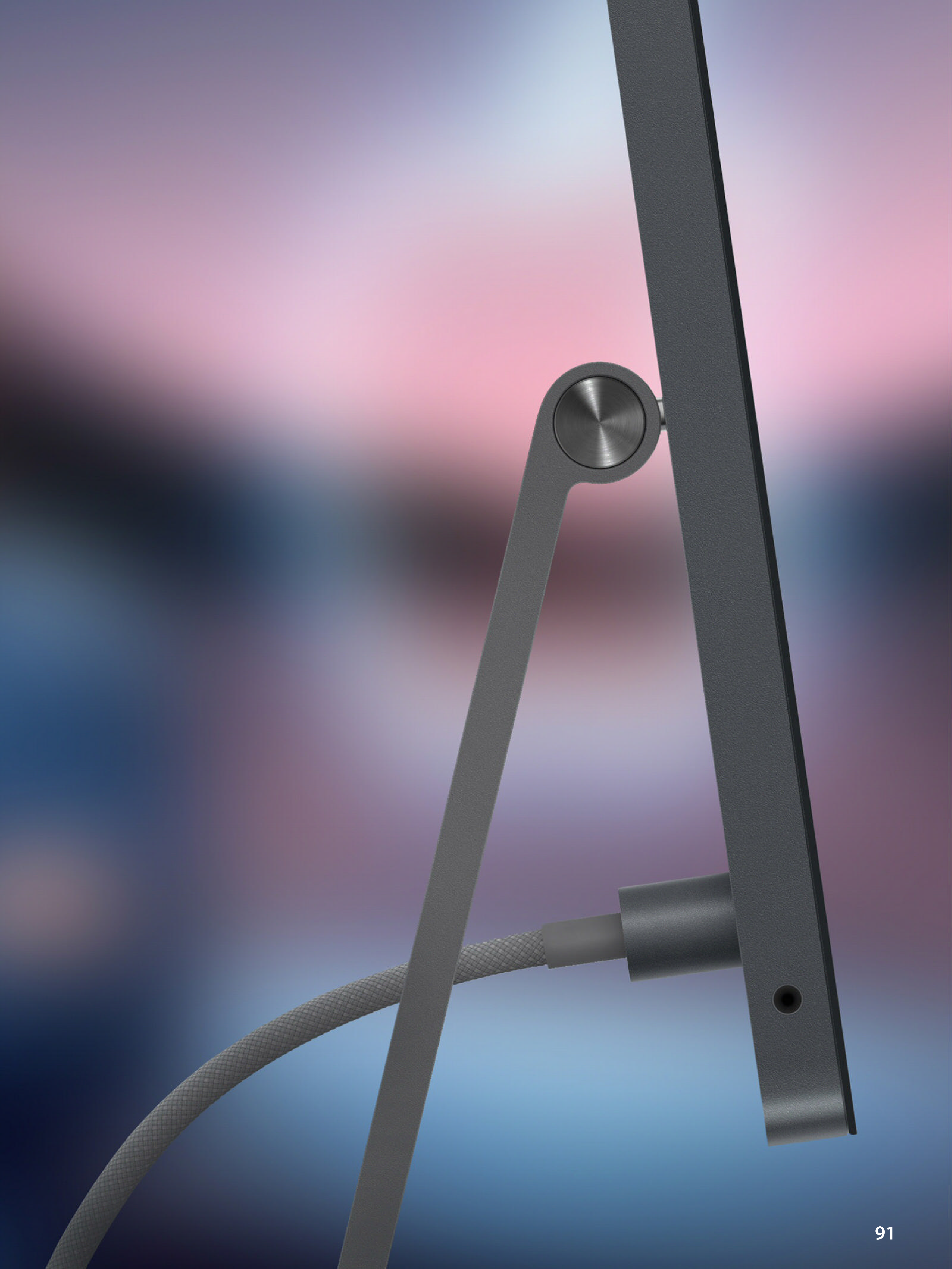
IT'S THE CHIPS THAT MATTER

One thing that's got professionals excited is that the new iMac Pro will likely adopt the same M1 Pro and M1 Max chips that Apple introduced alongside the new MacBook Pro, and it's thought that an additional higher-end configuration could also be offered. The M1 Pro and M1 Max both feature the same architecture based on the M1 chip, resulting in the same core functionality, including up to a 10-core CPU with eight performance cores and two efficiency cores, a 16-core Neural Engine, a media engine for hardware-accelerated H.264, HEVC, ProRes, and ProRes RAW, and a video decode engine. Where the two chips differ is in the extras. The M1 Pro chip, for example, offers up to 16-core GPU with 200GB/s memory bandwidth and support for up to 32GB of unified memory, whereas the M1 Max offers up to a 32-core GPU, 400GB/s memory bandwidth, and support for up to 64GB of unified memory. The M1 Pro offers a ProRes encode and decode engine and a video encode engine, whilst the Max offers two ProRes encode and decode engines and two video encode engines.

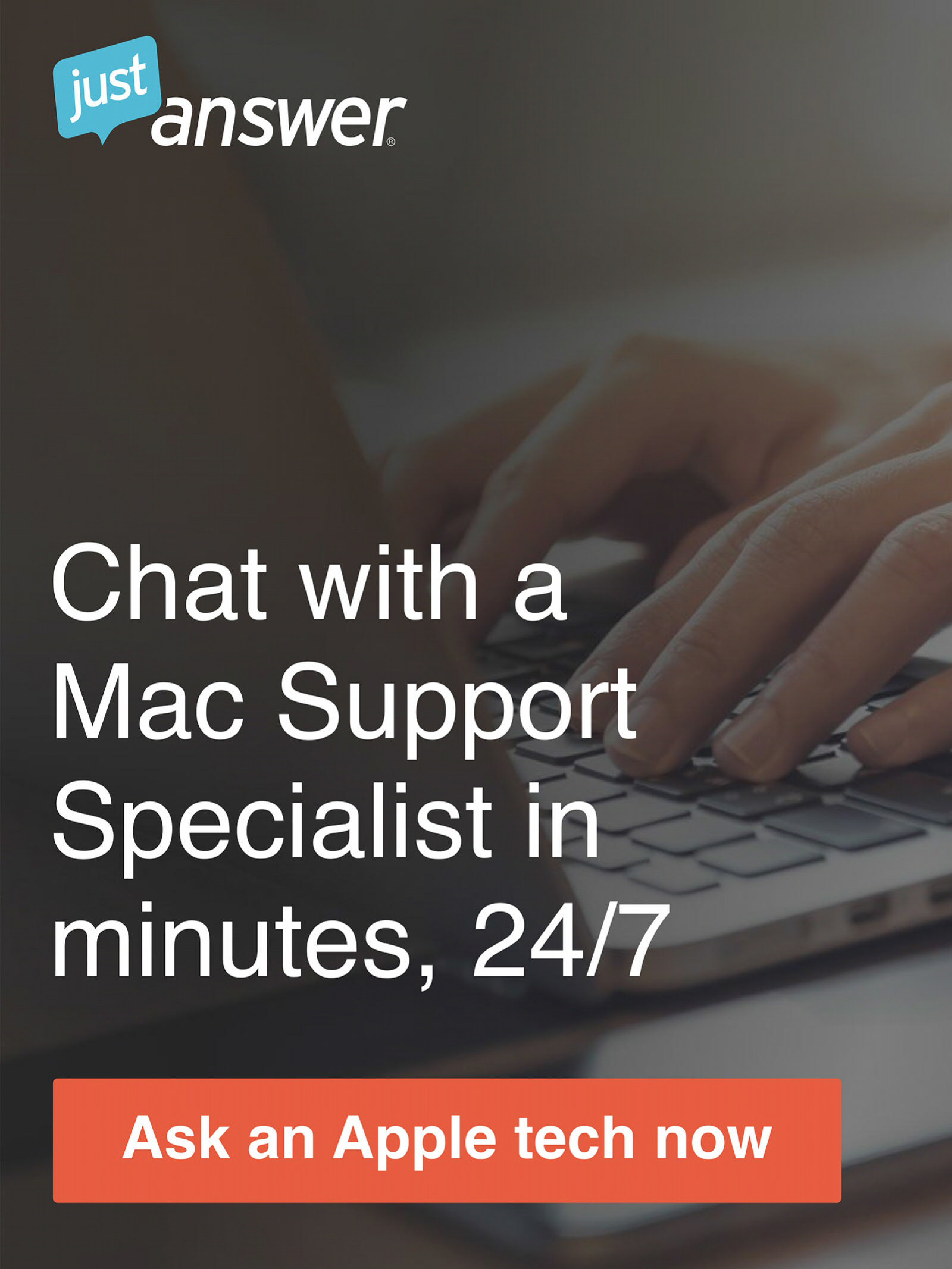
Whether users are editing video content, coding a new app, or even playing online games such as World of Warcraft, both the M1 Pro and M1 Max variants will be able to handle virtually anything users can throw at it, but naturally, the M1 Max model will take things to the next level and offer a little more breathing room should you need the additional performance.



The truth is, the upcoming iMac Pro will blow the current 27-inch model out of the water both in terms of aesthetics and performance. It's been a long time coming - the current iMac has looked the same for decades and its updates have only ever been marginal.



Bringing the iMac Pro in line with the rest of the new M1-powered Mac family will add yet another string to Apple's bow and confirm to consumers and professionals alike that Mac is the future.



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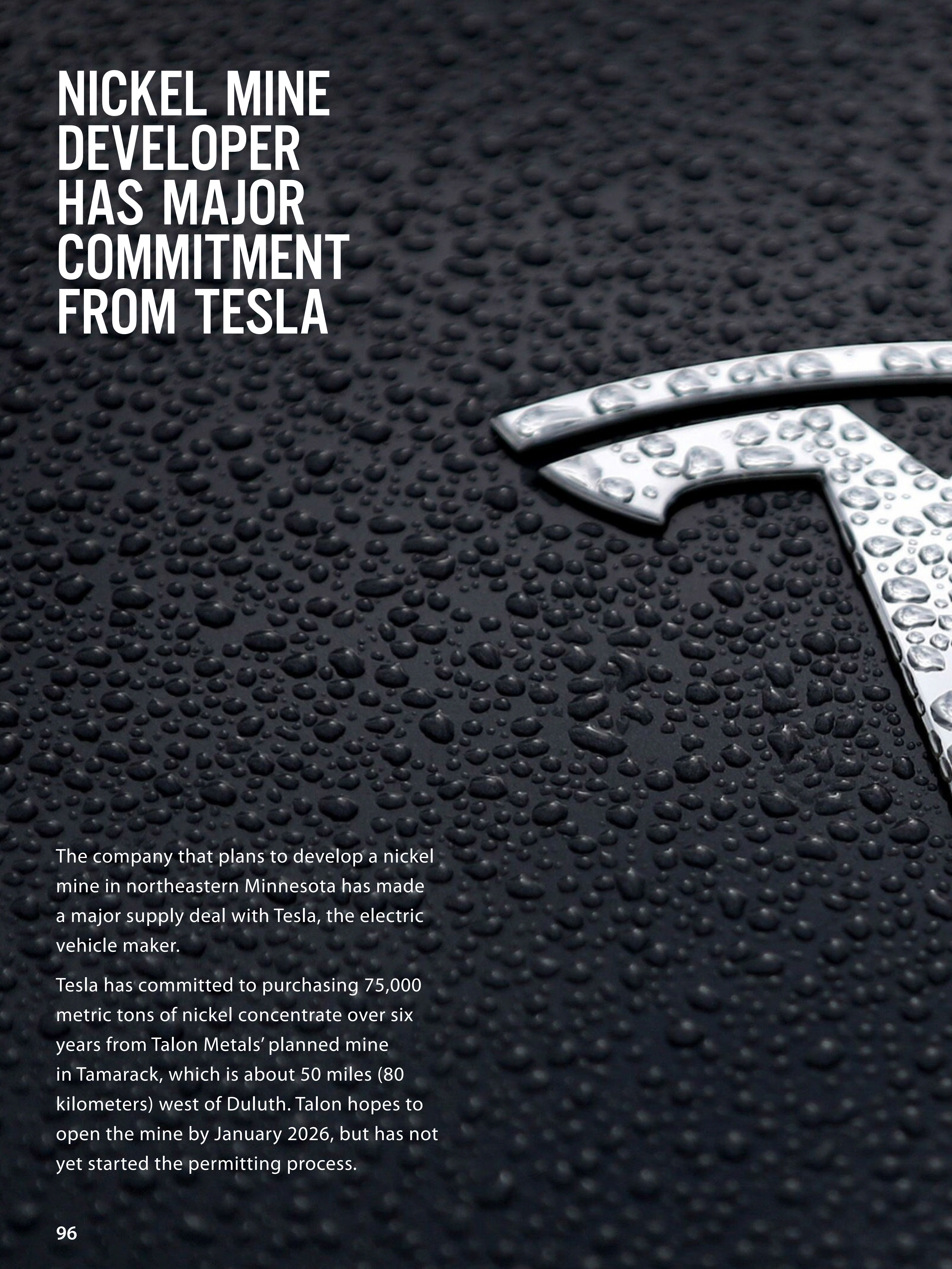
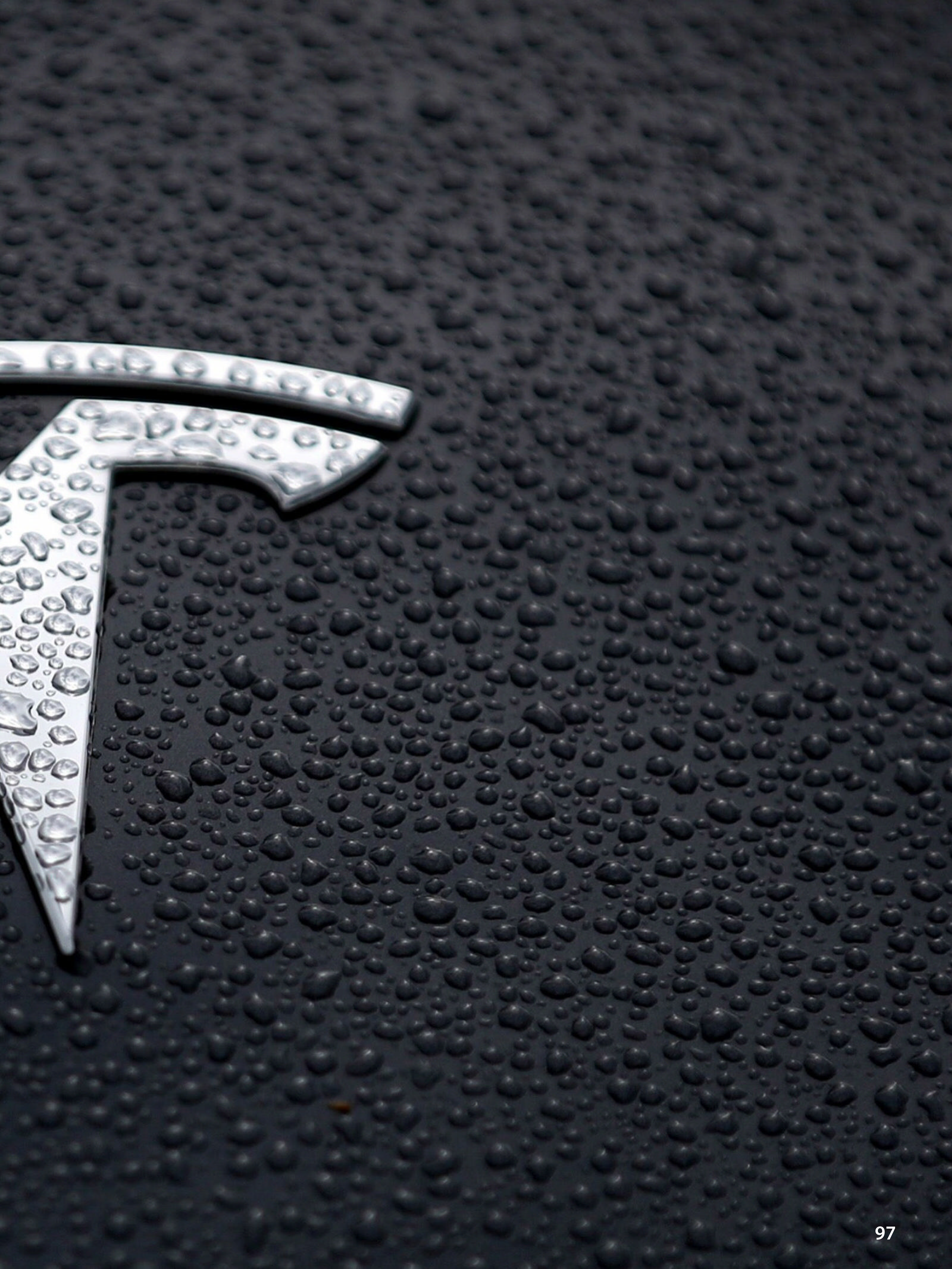
NICKEL MINE DEVELOPER HAS MAJOR COMMITMENT FROM TESLA



The company that plans to develop a nickel mine in northeastern Minnesota has made a major supply deal with Tesla, the electric vehicle maker.

Tesla has committed to purchasing 75,000 metric tons of nickel concentrate over six years from Talon Metals' planned mine in Tamarack, which is about 50 miles (80 kilometers) west of Duluth. Talon hopes to open the mine by January 2026, but has not yet started the permitting process.



TALON DISCOVERY
DANGER
Electrical Hazard
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Nickel is a key ingredient of electric vehicle batteries.

“This agreement is the start of an innovative partnership between Tesla and Talon for the responsible production of battery materials directly from the mine to the battery cathode,” Talon’s CEO, Henri van Rooyen, said in a statement.

Tesla would claim more than half of the mine’s production of nickel concentrate, which would be further refined before it could be used to make batteries, the Star Tribune reported.

“The Talon team has taken an innovative approach to the discovery, development and production of battery materials, including to permanently store carbon as part of mine operations,” Drew Baglino, Tesla’s senior vice president of powertrain and energy engineering, said in a statement.

Talon is developing a system that would capture CO2 from the air and permanently store it in rock waste from the mine.

“Responsible sourcing of battery materials has long been a focus for Tesla,” Baglino said, “and this project has the promise to accelerate the production of sustainable energy products in North America.”

Tesla’s agreement with Talon is its first for nickel in the United States.

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WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM WARNS CYBER RISKS ADD TO CLIMATE THREAT

Cyberthreats and the growing space race are emerging risks to the global economy, adding to existing challenges posed by climate change and the coronavirus pandemic, the World Economic Forum said in a report this week.

The Global Risks Report is usually released ahead of the annual elite winter gathering of CEOs and world leaders in the Swiss ski resort of Davos, but the event has been postponed for a second year in a row because of COVID-19. The World Economic Forum still plans some virtual sessions next week.

Here's a rundown of the report, which is based on a survey of about 1,000 experts and leaders:

WORLD OUTLOOK

As 2022 begins, the pandemic and its economic and societal impact still pose a “critical threat” to the world, the report said. Big differences between rich and poor nations’ access to vaccines mean their economies are recovering at uneven rates, which could widen social divisions and heighten geopolitical tensions.

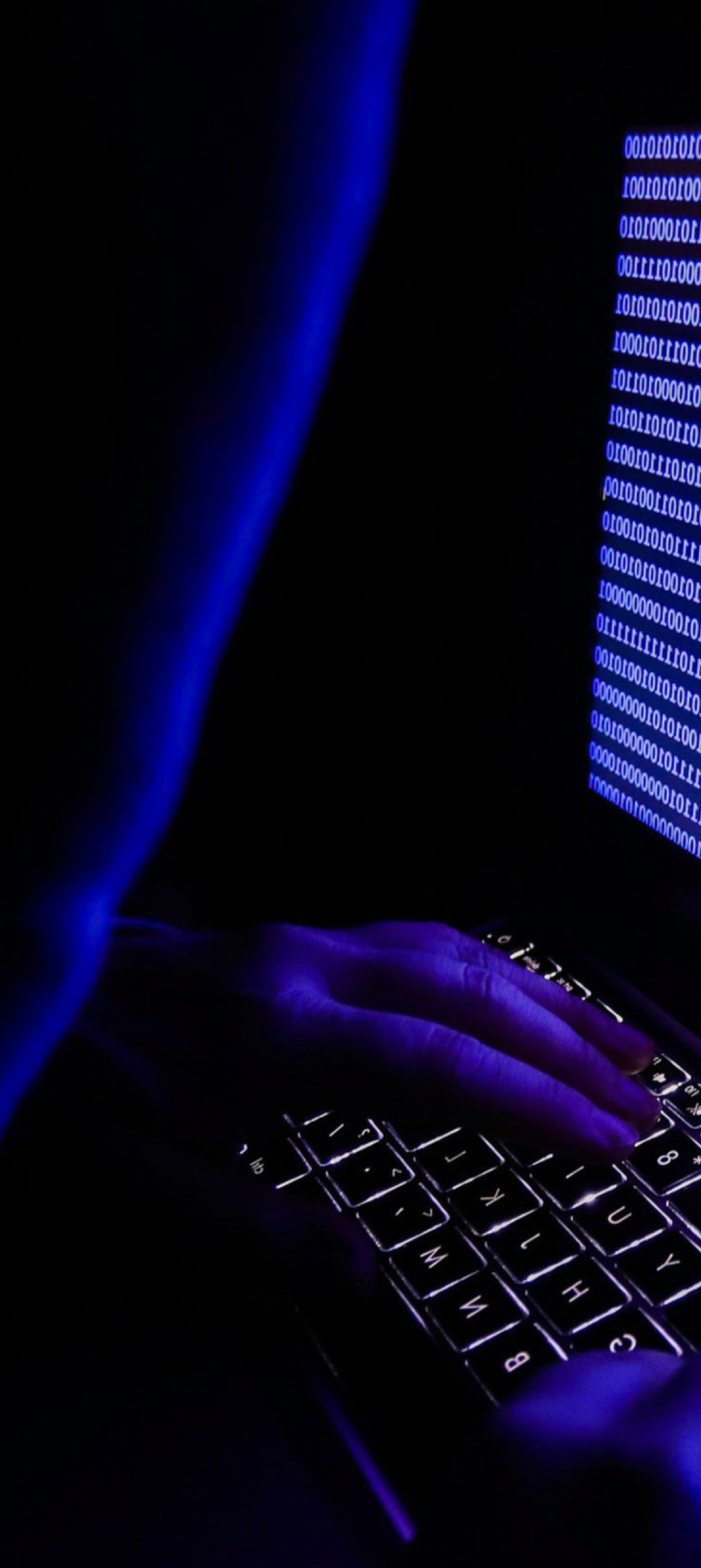
By 2024, the global economy is forecast to be 2.3% smaller than it would have been without the pandemic. But that masks the different rates of growth between developing nations, whose economies are forecast to be 5.5% smaller than before the pandemic, and rich countries, which are expected to expand 0.9%.

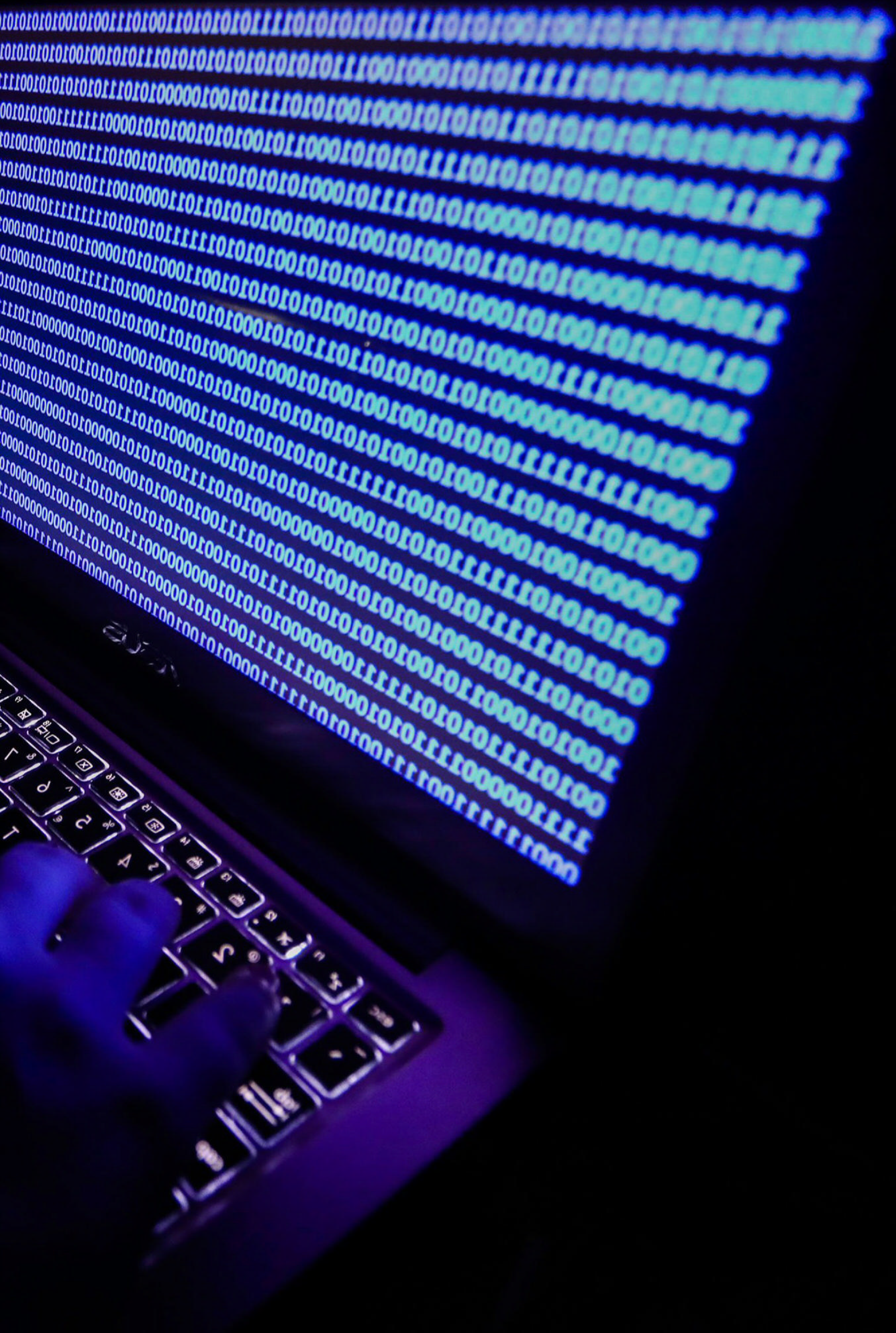
DIGITAL DANGERS

The pandemic forced a huge shift — requiring many people to work or attend class from home and giving rise to an exploding number of online platforms and devices to aid a transformation that has dramatically increased security risks, the report said.

“We’re at the point now where cyberthreats are growing faster than our ability to effectively prevent and manage them,” said Carolina Klint, a risk management leader at Marsh, whose parent company Marsh McLennan co-authored the report with Zurich Insurance Group and SK Group.

Cyberattacks are becoming more aggressive and widespread, as criminals use tougher tactics to go after more vulnerable targets, the report said. Malware and ransomware attacks have boomed, while the rise of cryptocurrencies makes it easy





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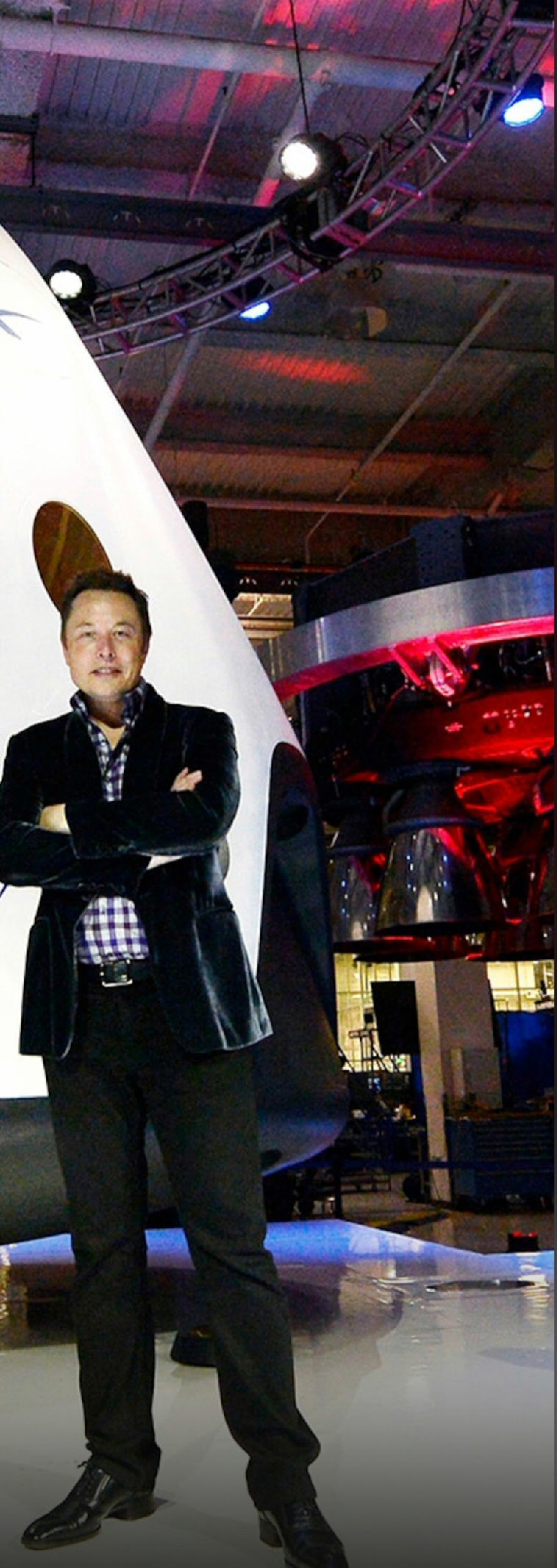

for online criminals to hide payments they have collected.

While those responding to the survey cited cybersecurity threats as a short- and medium-term risk, Klint said the report's authors were concerned that the issue wasn't ranked higher, suggesting it's a "blind spot" for companies and governments.

SPACE RACE

Space is the final frontier — for risk.

Falling costs for launch technology has led to a new space race between companies and governments. Last year, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos' space tourism venture Blue Origin and Virgin Galactic's Richard Branson took off, while Elon Musk's Space X business made big gains in launching astronauts and satellites.

Meanwhile, a host of countries are beefing up their space programs as they chase geopolitical and military power or scientific and commercial gains, the report said.

But all these programs raise the risk of frictions in orbit.

"Increased exploitation of these orbits carries the risk of congestion, an increase in debris and the possibility of collisions in a realm with few governance structures to mitigate new threats," the report said.

Space exploitation is one of the areas that respondents thought had among the least amount of international collaboration to deal with the challenges.

Experts and leaders responding to the survey "don't believe that much is being done in the best possible way moving forward," World Economic Forum's managing director, Saadia Zahidi, said at a virtual press briefing from Geneva.

Other areas include artificial intelligence, cyberattacks and migration and refugees, she said.

CLIMATE CRISIS

The environment remains the biggest long-term worry.

The planet's health over the next decade is the dominant concern, according to survey respondents, who cited failure to act on climate change, extreme weather, and loss of biodiversity as the top three risks.

The report noted that different countries are taking different approaches, with some moving faster to adopt a zero-carbon model than others. Both approaches come with downsides. While moving slowly could radicalize more people who think the government isn't acting urgently, a faster shift away from carbon intense industries could spark economic turmoil and throw millions out of work.

"Adopting hasty environmental policies could also have unintended consequences for nature," the report added. "There are still many unknown risks from deploying untested biotechnical and geoengineering technologies."

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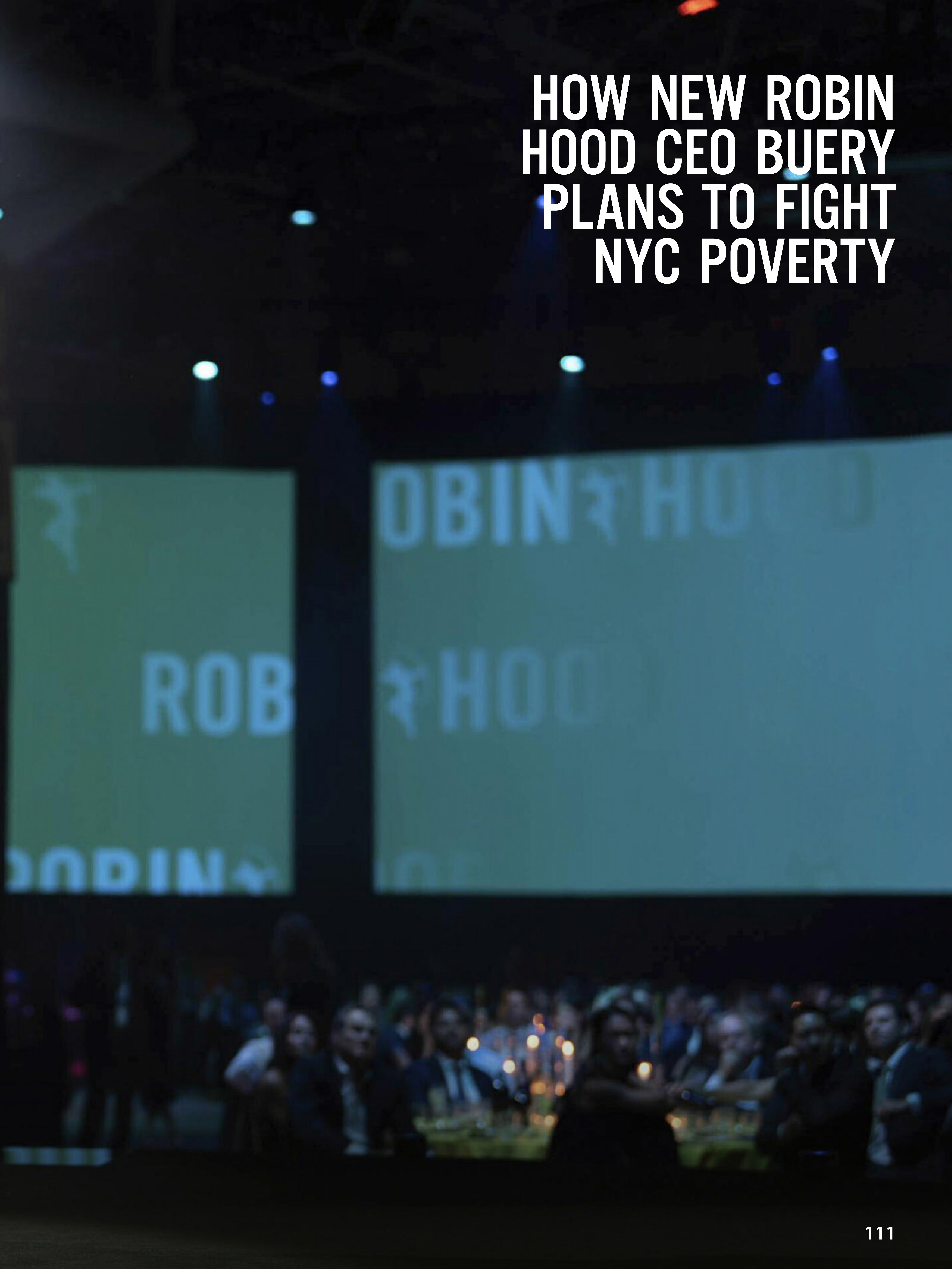
HOW NEW ROBIN HOOD CEO BUERY PLANS TO FIGHT NYC POVERTY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Richard R. Buery Jr., is starting his first full year as CEO of Robin Hood. But he's no stranger to New York City's largest poverty-fighting organization.

He first encountered the foundation 20 years ago, when Groundwork, the group he co-founded to support children in public housing developments in Brooklyn, received its first Robin Hood grant. Now, he is eager to bring his experience to lead the group that helps more than 500,000 New Yorkers each year.

Buery, 50, replaced the popular Wes Moore — a combat veteran, Rhodes Scholar and now a candidate for Maryland governor — as Robin Hood's CEO in September.

"I hope to do the same as he did but in my own way," said Buery, who has co-founded several nonprofits, including iMentor, Children's Aid College Prep Charter School, and the Mission Hill Summer Program. He also served as a deputy mayor of New York City, a period when he established the city's Pre-K for All program and founded the city's Department of Veterans Services.

"My goal," he said, "is to say, 'How do we come together to make our city better and stronger and one that works for everyone, particularly during this difficult time?' "

First, though, Buery must lead Robin Hood through the COVID-19 crisis in New York. He recently spoke with The Associated Press about his plans and his approach. The interview was edited for clarity and length.

Q: What is New York's current level of need?

A: The need is broad. We know the need in education is marked by the loss of learning

HOOD

opportunities that many young people experienced over the last year, but there are also social and emotional challenges for young people who have often been in isolation without some of the basic anchors schooling provides. Add to that the severe economic harm that is particularly concentrated in the community that we care most about -- families who've lost jobs and women who are basically forced to leave the workforce for lack of access to childcare.

Q: How much of that is due to COVID-19?

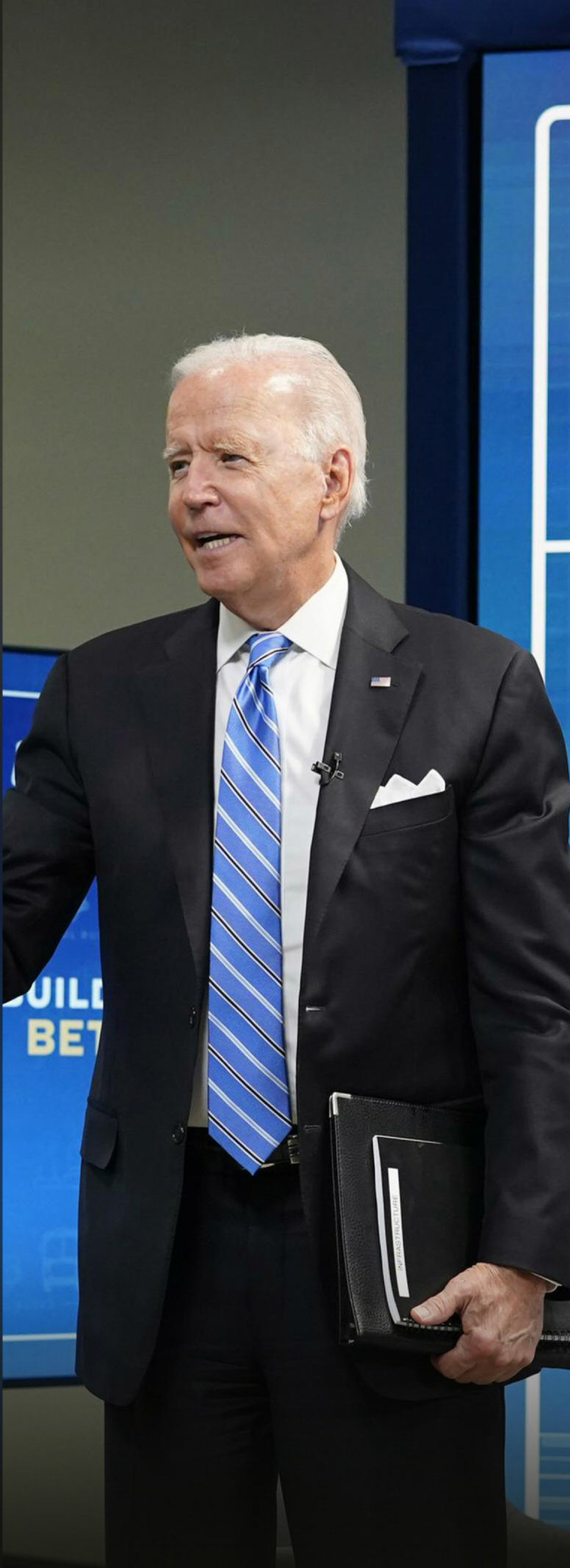
A: As an organization that exists to fight poverty, we see how every dimension has to do with the pandemic. It really reiterates the ways that those living in poverty are most at risk in crises like this one. People in poverty are more likely to have front-line jobs with the highest risk of exposure, without the same opportunity to take time off or work from home. They're much more likely to lack internet access, so they are often unable to maintain a normal school environment for their children. In every dimension, Robin Hood steps up in the midst of crises. Whether it's food, eviction prevention, we are there to meet those urgent needs.

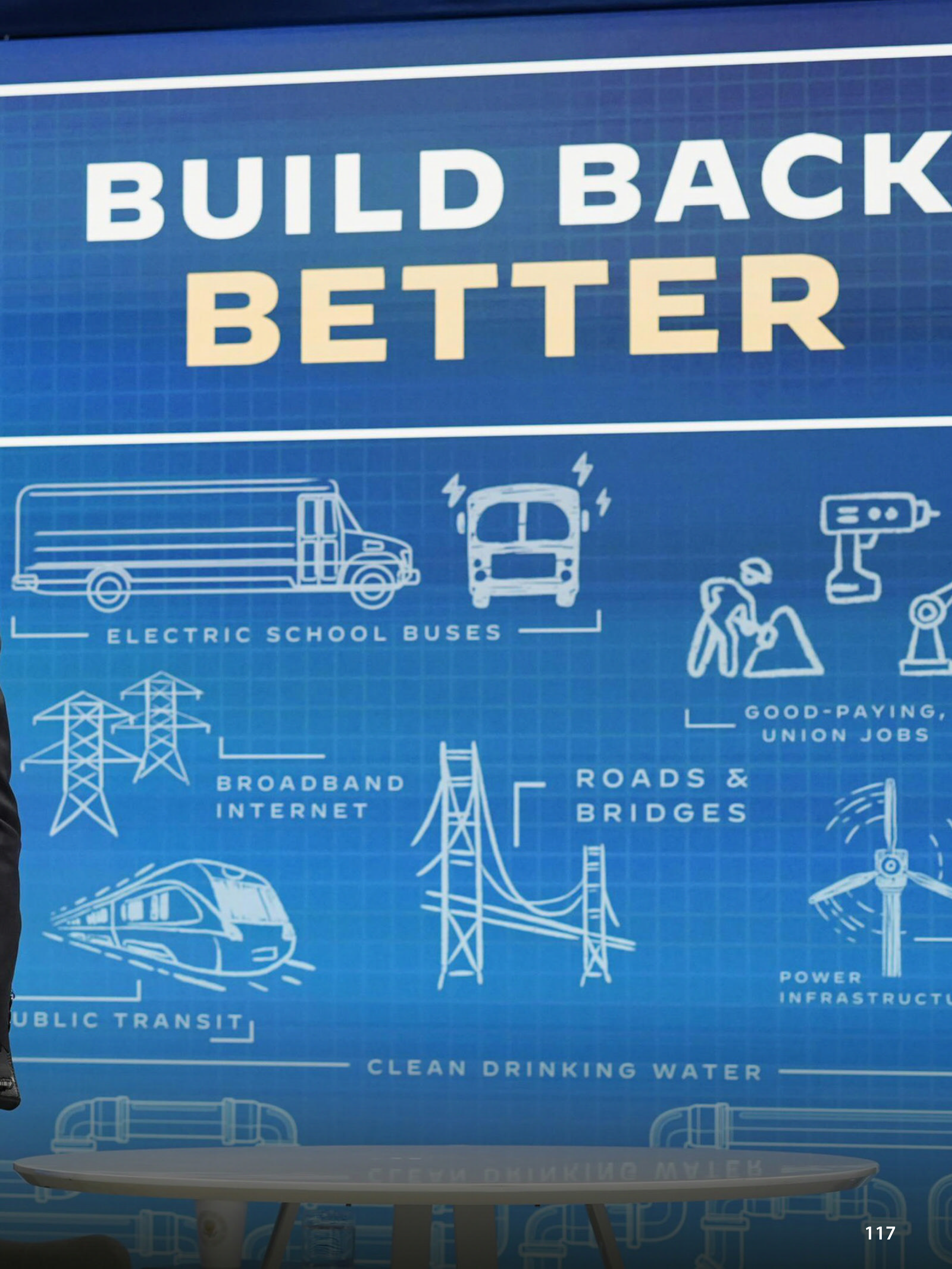
Q: One idea you developed is the community school initiative — making schools a central place where people can go for help.

A: It's a recognition that in order for school to be a place where every child can learn, it's not enough to focus on instructional quality. You also have to address the challenges students bring up at school. If you are hungry, depressed, if your family is in crisis, your school, to really be successful, has to have a strategy to meet all those needs. We have to invest in every school to make sure they have a staff person whose job it is to understand what partners are available and to create a plan to connect. We have over 200 meaningful partnerships — everything from comprehensive tutoring programs developed with (City University of New York) to support for teachers in creating curricula, to our mental and physical health providers. One interesting example is our work with Warby Parker to make sure that every kid in a New York City school has access to a free eye exam and access to a pair of glasses. We're really thinking about what the barriers to learning are in each school.

Q: Universal pre-K in New York has become such a big deal that it is now included in President Biden's Build Back Better proposal. How did it feel for you to get that implemented?

A: It's by far the greatest professional accomplishment of my life. It involved partners from government, community partners, business, philanthropy and higher education. It felt impossible. I wasn't sure we could pull it off. It was incredibly rewarding to be a part of bringing all those people, those institutions together to accomplish something that's so important, that feels like a lasting contribution to your city. It was just showing that New York City can do anything. We can do it.




BUILD BACK
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POWER
INFRASTRUCTU
UBLIC TRANSIT
CLEAN DRINKING WATER

SHOPPING FOR A CAR THIS YEAR WILL NOT BE THE SAME

...mited. Have fun out there. Jeep

Image: Andrew Burton

2021 was an unusual year for the automotive industry. While customer demand for new cars rebounded from the economic uncertainty of 2020, automakers found themselves unable to meet that demand because of semiconductor chip shortages and supply chain problems. So what should car shoppers expect for 2022? Much of the same, unfortunately.

“Competition for new vehicles will be fierce as inventory shortages persist in 2022,” said Ivan Drury, senior manager.

Shoppers today must contend with a limited selection, dealership markups, little to no discounts, and a greater sense of urgency to

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move quickly on a deal. With this in mind, here are five ways that car buying has changed, along with a few tips on how to manage it.

ONGOING VEHICLE SHORTAGE MEANS HIGHER PRICES

Vehicles that make their way onto the lot are more likely to be in more expensive trims and either marked up in price or with numerous dealer-installed accessories that achieve the same effect. And if that wasn't enough to contend with, you'll find that dealerships are much less likely to come down on price since they know there aren't many other options available. It's a textbook case of supply and demand.

These days, paying MSRP might actually be a "good deal," relatively speaking.

Tip: We recommend casting your net out farther to increase your options. Not every dealership is marking up vehicles. If you see one you like, be prepared to move quickly because it may not be there the next time.

YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO ORDER YOUR NEXT CAR

One way to avoid the markups and dealer add-ons is to order the vehicle. This ensures that you get exactly the color and options that you want, provided you're willing to wait roughly six to eight weeks.

The basic idea is that ordering a vehicle saves the dealership on lot fees and insurance for vehicles parked on- or off-site, and it can then pass the savings on to the consumer. The "savings" these days is paying MSRP and not being charged for dealer add-ons or the convenience of having a vehicle right away.

Tip: The easiest way to order a vehicle is to use an automaker's website to build the vehicle configuration you want and then send that information to your preferred dealership.

LEASING WILL BE LESS ENTICING

Analysts say that leasing is becoming less popular for a couple of reasons. As inventories remain low and the cars that are in stock tend to be more loaded with options, they're less likely to be targeted by automakers' leasing programs because these vehicles typically suffer higher depreciation than their mid- to lower-level trim counterparts.

Tip: You might need to do some extra planning and research before your lease ends to find affordable options, said Drury. You can also consider buying out your lease, as it will likely be a better deal since the selling price for it was calculated years before the market took a turn.

USED VEHICLES MAY NOT OFFER RELIEF

Many new-vehicle shoppers turned to the used market for a better selection or respite from the higher new car prices. But this, in turn, caused its own shortage and record-high prices. Analysts predict that in the coming year, the average used vehicle price will surpass the $30,000 mark for the first time. Prices for 1-to-3-year-old vehicles will also often approach or exceed the price of what they would cost brand-new.

Tip: If you have your heart set on used, it's worth taking a look at certified pre-owned vehicles. They may be pricier than other used vehicles,

but they come with a warranty, are often in better condition, and you're more likely to get a subsidized interest rate, said Drury. Finally, trade-in values are very strong now, which can help offset the higher pricing.

DEALERSHIPS WILL BE MORE OPEN TO HOME DELIVERIES

Having a vehicle delivered to your home was something of a "secret menu" item in past years, reserved for VIP clients or those in the know. But after the COVID-19 pandemic forced the shutdown of countless dealership showrooms, home deliveries and the subsequent paperwork became almost a necessity. It will vary by location and brand, but your chances of wrapping up a car deal at home are significantly better than before.

Tip: Make sure to ask for a home delivery when making a deal on a car. Filling out any finance paperwork beforehand will greatly speed up the process.

It will be slim pickings for both new- and used-car shoppers this year, but if you cast a wider net and are prepared to act quickly on a car deal, you should be able to find a new car at a relatively fair price.

Image: luke Sharrett

ATLANTA
RWDSU
RWDSU
UFCW
RWDSU
VOTE UNION YES
Without Change Nothing Changes
UNION YES

Ingersoll Rand
VOTE

2ND ELECTION FOR AMAZON WORKERS IN ALABAMA WILL BE BY MAIL

A federal labor board said that Amazon workers in Bessemer, Alabama, will vote by mail next month in a re-run election to decide whether or not to unionize.

The National Labor Relations Board said that the ballots will be mailed out Feb. 4 and must be returned before the counting starts on March 28.

The move comes roughly a month and a half after the board ordered a new union election for Amazon workers based on objections by the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union to the first vote that took place in April.

RWDSU
UFCW
RWDSU
On Your Side

Image: Elijah Nouvelage

The move was a blow to **Amazon.com** Inc., which spent about a year aggressively campaigning for warehouse workers in Bessemer to reject the union, which they ultimately did by a wide margin.

In a 20-page decision, the regional director for the NLRB Lisa Henderson focused much attention on Amazon's installation of a U.S. Postal Service mailbox at the main employee entrance, which may have created the false impression that the company was the one conducting the election process. Henderson also rejected Amazon's argument that it was making voting easier and was trying to encourage as high a turnout as possible.

"Our employees have always had the choice of whether or not to join a union, and they overwhelmingly chose not to join the RWDSU last year," said Amazon spokeswoman Barbara Agrait in an emailed statement, adding that she looks forward to having its team in Bessemer "'having their voices heard again."

Meanwhile, the RWDSU took issue with NLRB's decision to hold an election by mail.

"We are deeply concerned that the decision fails to adequately prevent Amazon from continuing its objectionable behavior in a new election," said the union in a statement. The union is pushing for in-person election, which it feels could make the process fairer to workers.

RWDSU faces an uphill battle to unionize workers given such high quit rates, but Amazon did reach a settlement with the NLRB last month to allow its employees to freely organize — and without retaliation.

Think

prime
V525448
RWDSU
On Your Side
RWDSU

Image: Dustin Chambers

According to the settlement, the online behemoth said it would reach out to its warehouse workers — former and current — via email who were on the job anytime from March 22 of last year to notify them of their organizing rights.

The settlement outlined that Amazon workers, which number 750,000 in the U.S., have more room to organize within the buildings. For example, Amazon pledged it will not threaten workers with discipline or call the police when they are engaging in union activity in exterior non-work areas during non-work time.

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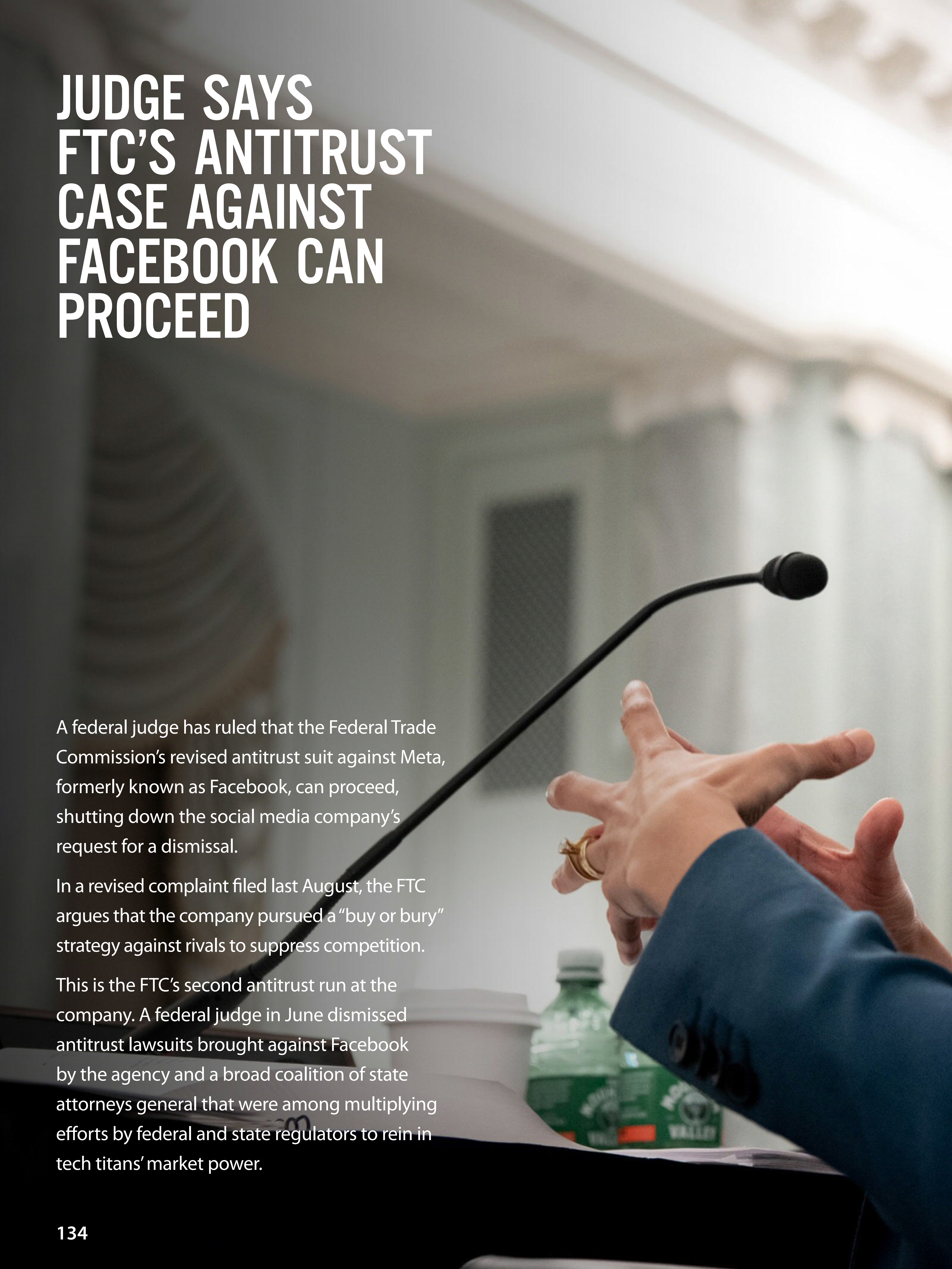
Image: Elijah Nouvelage

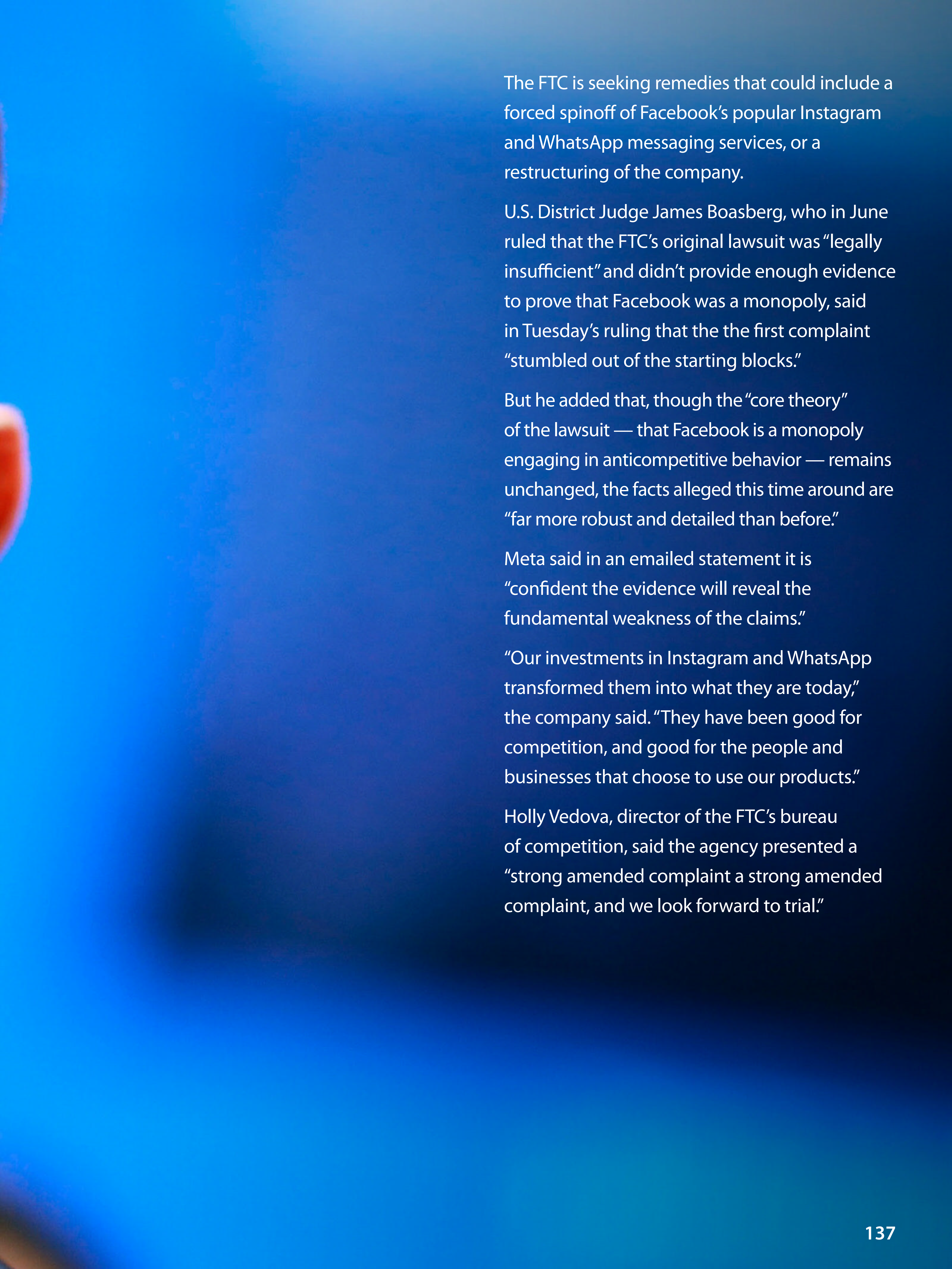
JUDGE SAYS FTC'S ANTITRUST CASE AGAINST FACEBOOK CAN PROCEED



A federal judge has ruled that the Federal Trade Commission's revised antitrust suit against Meta, formerly known as Facebook, can proceed, shutting down the social media company's request for a dismissal.

In a revised complaint filed last August, the FTC argues that the company pursued a "buy or bury" strategy against rivals to suppress competition.

This is the FTC's second antitrust run at the company. A federal judge in June dismissed antitrust lawsuits brought against Facebook by the agency and a broad coalition of state attorneys general that were among multiplying efforts by federal and state regulators to rein in tech titans' market power.



The FTC is seeking remedies that could include a forced spinoff of Facebook's popular Instagram and WhatsApp messaging services, or a restructuring of the company.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg, who in June ruled that the FTC's original lawsuit was "legally insufficient" and didn't provide enough evidence to prove that Facebook was a monopoly, said in Tuesday's ruling that the the first complaint "stumbled out of the starting blocks."

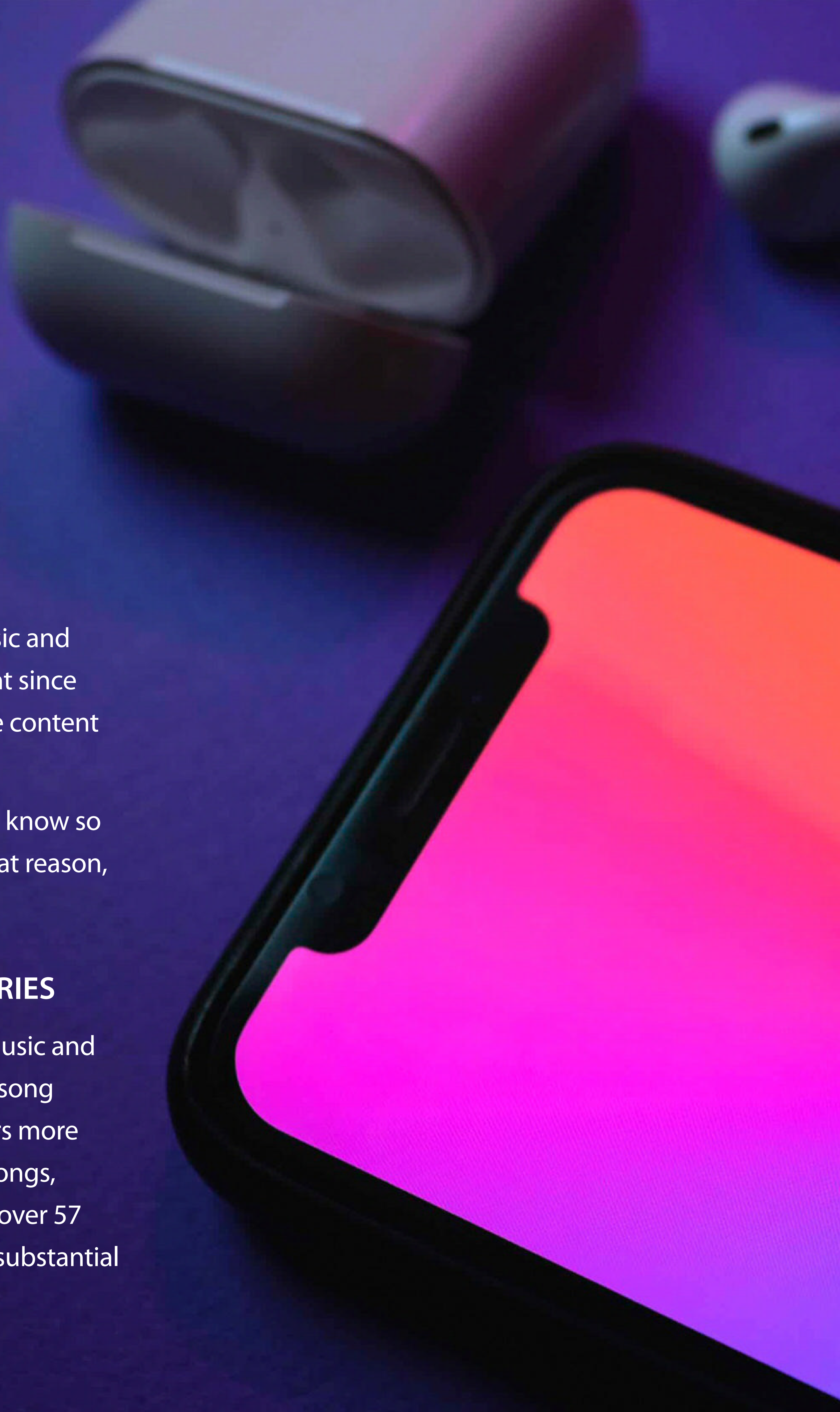
But he added that, though the "core theory" of the lawsuit — that Facebook is a monopoly engaging in anticompetitive behavior — remains unchanged, the facts alleged this time around are "far more robust and detailed than before."

Meta said in an emailed statement it is "confident the evidence will reveal the fundamental weakness of the claims."

"Our investments in Instagram and WhatsApp transformed them into what they are today," the company said. "They have been good for competition, and good for the people and businesses that choose to use our products."

Holly Vedova, director of the FTC's bureau of competition, said the agency presented a "strong amended complaint a strong amended complaint, and we look forward to trial."

APPLE MUSIC VS. TIDAL



Streaming services such as Apple Music and Tidal, both of which have been present since 2015, are well-known for the exclusive content they offer.

The average listener, though, may not know so much about the two platforms. For that reason, we're comparing them.

OFFLINE LISTENING AND LIBRARIES

All premium subscriptions to Apple Music and Tidal provide you access to a massive song catalog. No matter which service offers more content (Apple Music has 50 million songs, whilst Tidal customers have access to over 57 million), both allow you to build up a substantial music library.

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND PLANS

If you live in the United States, you'll pay $9.99 per month for an individual Apple Music subscription. You then have access to all of Apple's music and video content, new releases, and exclusives, and be able to stream and download content.

MUSIC

TIDAL

Individual subscriptions to Tidal are available at $9.99 a month, though costs may vary in other regions. Additionally, an individual subscription for $19.99 per month includes lossless "High Fidelity" sound quality and HD video.

Apple Music student subscriptions cost $4.99 per month and may only be obtained by logging in with the credentials provided by your school institution. Two student options are available from Tidal: $4.99 for the Premium subscription, and $9.99 for HiFi. To continue receiving these benefits, students must re-verify their eligibility at least once every 12 months.

With the $14.99 per month family plan from Apple Music, up to six family members can each have their account to use the service. Families can sign up for Tidal's HiFi and Premium services for $14.99 and $29.99, respectively, per month.

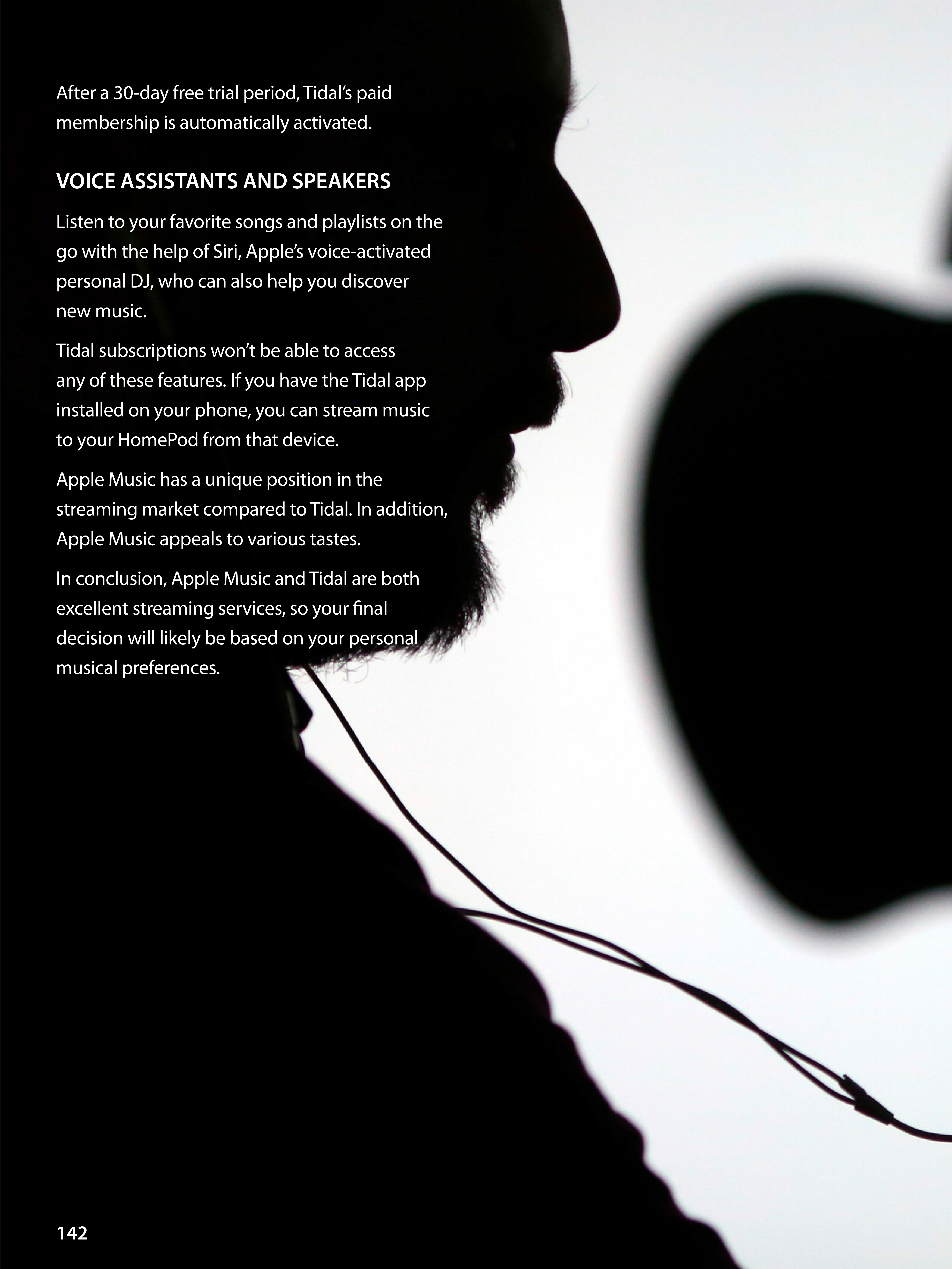
STREAMING QUALITY

Apple is upgrading its entire music catalog to Lossless Audio, which keeps the original audio file's details. Subscribers to Apple Music will be able to hear songs as they were recorded in the studio by the artists themselves.

In comparison, Tidal has been more geared toward audiophiles. Tidal's Premium and HiFi plans allow users to select between low-quality and high-quality streams when streaming music.

FREE TRIALS

A three-month free trial of Apple Music's paid service is available; however, unless the user cancels the trial before the three months are up, the service will automatically convert to a paid subscription.



After a 30-day free trial period, Tidal's paid membership is automatically activated.

VOICE ASSISTANTS AND SPEAKERS

Listen to your favorite songs and playlists on the go with the help of Siri, Apple's voice-activated personal DJ, who can also help you discover new music.

Tidal subscriptions won't be able to access any of these features. If you have the Tidal app installed on your phone, you can stream music to your HomePod from that device.

Apple Music has a unique position in the streaming market compared to Tidal. In addition, Apple Music appeals to various tastes.

In conclusion, Apple Music and Tidal are both excellent streaming services, so your final decision will likely be based on your personal musical preferences.

MUSIC

WILL SMITH, LADY GAGA, BEN AFFLECK SCORE SAG NOMINATIONS

The Oscar race may be missing in-person glitz this year, but it doesn't lack for star power. Will Smith, Lady Gaga and Ben Affleck landed individual nominations for the 28th Screen Actors Guild Awards on Wednesday, while the casts of "Belfast" and "CODA" were among those nominated for the guild's top award, best ensemble.

The nominees were announced Wednesday by actors Vanessa Hudgens and Rosario Dawson on Instagram Live. While the nominations were conducted virtually due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, the streamed announcement still represented one of the most meaningful mornings in an awards season largely snuffed out by the pandemic.

Joining Kenneth Branagh's semi-autobiographical "Belfast" and the coming-of-age drama "CODA" for best ensemble were the

casts for Ridley Scott's true-tale, high-camp "House of Gucci," Adam McKay's apocalypse comedy "Don't Look Up" and the family tennis drama "King Richard." Notably left out were the casts of Steven Spielberg's lavish "West Side Story" revival (which landed a supporting nod for Ariana DeBose) and Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog." Campion's gothic drama, though, landed individual SAG noms for Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst and Kodi Smit-McPhee.

The SAG Awards have more of the awards season spotlight this year since the Golden Globes — usually the kickoff party to final Oscar stretch — made barely a peep. The Globes were unceremoniously announced Sunday on Twitter in a private ceremony due to Hollywood's boycott of the beleaguered Hollywood Foreign Press Association over diversity and ethical issues. The omicron surge also prompted the Critics Choice Awards to postpone its January 9 in-person gala. For the second straight year, Oscar season has gone virtual — and struggled to make much noise.

But the SAG nominations suggest that plenty of famous faces are in the hunt this year. Along with Will Smith ("King Richard") and Cumberbatch, the nominees for best male lead actor are: Denzel Washington ("The Tragedy of Macbeth"), Andrew Garfield ("Tick, Tick ... Boom!") and Javier Bardem ("Being the Ricardos").

Up for best female lead are: Lady Gaga ("House of Gucci"), Jessica Chastain ("The Eyes of Tammy Faye"), Olivia Colman ("The Lost Daughter"), Nicole Kidman ("Being the Ricardos") and Jennifer Hudson ("Respect").

Joining Dunst and DeBose in the best female supporting category are Caitriona Balfe ("Belfast"), Cate Blanchett ("Nightmare Alley") and Ruth Negga ("Passing"). The best male supporting nominees are: Affleck ("The Tender Bar"), Bradley Cooper ("Licorice Pizza"), Troy Kotsur ("CODA"), Jared Leto ("House of Gucci") and Smit-McPhee.

Kotsur is the first deaf actor to land an individual SAG nomination.

The SAG Awards, presented by the actors guild SAG-AFTRA, are among the most reliable Oscar bellwethers. Seldom does a movie or performance not nominated by the screen actors end up winning at the Academy Awards. Actors make up the biggest percentage of the film academy, so their choices have the largest sway.

But last year, SAG and the academy diverged more than usual. Only one of its acting winners — Daniel Kaluuya ("Judas and the Black Messiah") — repeated at the Oscars. (The other SAG winners were Chadwick Boseman and Viola Davis in "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," and Yuh-Jung Youn in "Minari.") The Aaron Sorkin courtroom drama "The Trial of the Chicago 7" won best ensemble at a virtual SAG Awards while Chloé Zhao's "Nomadland" — which included many nonprofessional actors and went unnominated for SAG's ensemble award — triumphed at the Oscars.

That history will give hope to supporters of Kristen Stewart ("Spencer"), maybe the most notable performer overlooked Wednesday. Others that missed out include Peter Dinklage ("Cyrano"), Ciarán Hinds ("Belfast") and Rachel Zegler ("West Side Story").

While some have rooted for some of the year's most popular blockbusters to give the flagging Oscars a populist jolt, "Spider-Man: No Way Home," "Dune" and "No Time To Die" received no major nominations from the actors guild. "Dune" and "No Time to Die" did, though, join "Black Widow," "The Matrix Resurrections" and "Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings" in the stunt ensemble category.

Yet possibly the most popular TV series of 2021 did haul in plenty of recognition. Netflix's much-watched "Squid Game" was nominated for four SAG awards including best drama series. The television nominations were also led by HBO's "Succession" (four nods including best drama series and best actor for Jeremy Strong and Brian Cox); "Ted Lasso" (five nods including best comedy series); and "The Morning Show" (four nods including best drama series).

The 28th annual SAG Awards are to be held Feb. 27 and will be broadcast on TNT and TBS. The Oscars are scheduled for March 27.

TIME TO BID GOODBYE TO 'HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA'

Hotel Transylvania: Transformania - Sneak Peek

Here are some good things about the fourth Hotel Transylvania movie: Kathryn Hahn, who is as evocative a voice actor as she is in live action; The monster sidekicks voiced by David Spade, Keegan-Michael Key, Steve Buscemi and Brad Abrell; A joke about a single marshmallow (really); The revelation that the invisible man has been naked this whole time; The 94-minute runtime; And its easy accessibility on Amazon Prime Video starting on Jan. 14.

But perhaps the best thing about " Hotel Transylvania: Transformania " is that it's the end. The well of ideas on this particular property has apparently run dry and they have made the wise decision to show themselves the door. Though not wise enough to end on a particularly high note.

What started as a clever enough riff on a father-daughter relationship, monsters and the hospitality industry has been on cruise control from its early days and has been running out of fuel since. It's hard to shake the feeling that everyone was just phoning it in for this final go. Actually, it's not even "everyone" since Adam Sandler, who was the marquee sell for the previous three as Count "Drac" Dracula, managed to bow out early. Kevin James did too.

This time, under the direction of Derek Drymon and Jennifer Kluska, Drac is voiced by Brian Hull, who does a fine job approximating Sandler's vampire shtick. And though the character has had three movies to get used to the idea of his daughter's relationship, he hasn't evolved much from

the first movie, when he sits back in horror as Mavis (Selena Gomez) meets and falls in with a human man, Johnny (Andy Samberg). In the world of Hotel Transylvania, they've since married AND had a child, but Johnny still feels like an outsider, and Drac is still loathe to accept him as part of the family. So, in this installment, which was executive produced and co-written by franchise creator Genndy Tartakovsky, Drac decides in a backstage panic to not make a big, public announcement about giving the hotel to Mavis and Johnny.

Johnny, thinking it's his fault because he's not a monster, asks Van Helsing (Jim Gaffigan) to help him change. It works. He becomes a toothy, goofy, scaly abomination and everything goes haywire. Drac becomes human, which for him means out of shape and kind of pathetic, like a stereotype of an American on vacation, raising uncomfortable questions as to whether or not the transformations are a commentary on the subject's essential selves or humans in general. It's even further compounded by the human forms Frank, Murray, Wayne and Griffin take — one is handsome, another ancient. Regardless, no one cares to stay altered, and they all have to travel around the globe to find a crystal to change them back so it doesn't become permanent.

It's hard to overstate just how garish and frenetic this whole endeavor is. Even with the explosion of colors it still strains to hold interest. The manic "Hotel Transylvania: Transformania" does not seem to be for parents or for very young kids. Perhaps

there's a sweet spot for 8- to 12-year-olds who may love these characters and be on board for whatever adventure they find themselves in, but even this might test their patience.

"Hotel Transylvania: Transformania," a Sony Pictures/Amazon Prime Video release on Prime Video on Friday, is rated PG by the Motion Picture Association of America for "cartoon nudity, some action and rude humor." Running time: 94 minutes. One star out of four.

MPAA Definition of PG: Parental guidance suggested.

Hotel Transylvania: Transformania - Official Trailer

A SOLID IF BY-THE-NUMBERS SPY THRILLER IN ‘THE 355’

The 355 - Official Trailer 2

It’s always a little suspect when too much is made of a big action movie being “female-fronted.” Unfortunately, Hollywood has decided lately that in course correcting for decades of gender inequity in certain genres that it’s not enough to just make an action-packed movie starring more than one woman: They must let the audience know that they know that this is A Girl Power Moment. And frankly, whether it’s the lady Avengers assembling in “Infinity War,” a montage of Girls Doing Sports and Science in the latest “Charlie’s Angels,” or all of “Ocean’s 8,” it’s never not insulting to its purported audience.

There have been subtler, cleverer and just plain better efforts at bringing women to the forefront of so-called male genres (from “Widows” to “Spy”), but it’s hard not to go into something like “ The 355,” which has been written about as a female “Jason Bourne” meets “Mission: Impossible” for over four years, a little wary. We’ve been burned before, no matter how many Oscar nominees are on the poster. And this one is dripping in photogenic talent, with Jessica Chastain as a CIA agent, Diane Kruger as a German spy, Lupita Nyong’o as a former MI6 operative and Penélope Cruz as a Colombian psychologist who all find themselves searching for the movie’s McGuffin.

“The 355,” directed by Simon Kinberg (“X-Men: Dark Phoenix”) who co-wrote with Theresa Rebeck (“Smash”), is not an instant classic by any means. It is, however, a straightforward and solidly entertaining spy thriller that (mostly) avoids the impulse

The 355 – Official Trailer | Universal Pictures

to pat itself on the back too obviously. Well, that is until a cringey "two months later" sequence at the end that leaves the door open for a welcome sequel. But there's enough good preceding that moment to almost excuse it and much of that has to do with its cast, which also includes Sebastian Stan, Edgar Ramírez and Bingbing Fan.

The premise isn't groundbreaking and at times even a little predictable: There's a microchip floating around that can access any closed system, and all the bad guys in the world want it. And there are many, many intelligence agencies trying to stop it from getting in the wrong hands. More than a few aren't just playing for one team either. As in most every spy movie for the past 50 years, there's talk of impending World War III, but no one is coming to this for original stakes.

And "The 355" hits all the expected beats ably, though at times it also makes you appreciate just how good a spoof Paul Fieg's "Spy" is. Their globetrotting brings them to sleek high-rises and crowded markets, they fight in hoodies and in heels, they find an excuse for our heroines to get glammed up at a major auction (all spies deserve at least one black tie affair in the middle of all the chaos), and they even get to share a beer and a few war stories.

The main characters are a little simply drawn and you're bound to get sick of Chastain's nickname ("Mace"), but the actors give them enough depth to pass. Not only do you believe that these are all smart, capable women (who show you that instead of

The 355 - Packing A Punch Featurette

telling), they also all seem like they've all lived lives before the cameras started shooting them. Nyong'o, in particular, is a standout as the tech wiz who was trying to move on with her life. Kruger does a great job elevating her character beyond "angry, loner German." Cruz gets the short stick as the fish out of water, but she's still fun to have in the mix.

Mostly, "The 355" succeeds where others have come up short because it put the movie and the story first — not the message.

"The 355," a Universal Pictures release in theaters Friday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association of America for "sequences of strong violence, brief strong language, and suggestive material." Running time: 122 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

MPAA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

PIXAR'S 'TURNING RED' TO DEBUT DIRECTLY ON DISNEY+

HUGE POSTER INSIDE!
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4★TOWN ANNOUNCE NEW TOUR!
4★TOWN
Hottest Band of the Year!
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Lester B. Pearson Middle School
2002-2003

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The third straight Pixar feature film will go straight to Disney+, the Walt Disney Co. announced.

“Turning Red” will premiere exclusively on Disney+ on March 11, the studio said. Kareem Daniel, chairman of distribution for Disney, cited the pandemic and the slower recovery for family films at the box office.

“Given the delayed box office recovery, particularly for family films, flexibility remains at the core of our distribution decisions,” said Daniel in a statement.

The last two Pixar releases, “Soul” and “Luca,” also went straight to streaming during the pandemic. Before that, “Onward” launched in theaters in early March 2020, just as the pandemic forced theaters closed. It soon after began streaming to Disney+.

Disney describes “Turning Red” as the story of “a confident, dorky 13-year-old torn between staying her mother’s dutiful daughter and the chaos of adolescence.” Directed by Domee Shi (who made the Pixar short “Bao”), it’s the first Pixar film helmed solely by a woman. Rosalie Chiang and Sandra Oh lead the voice cast.

Turning Red | *Official Trailer*

GRAND THEFT AUTO MAKER BUYS FARMVILLE COMPANY IN $12.7B DEAL

grand theft auto
Vice
R1
R1

Take-Two Interactive, maker of "Grand Theft Auto" and "Red Dead Redemption," is buying Zynga, maker of "FarmVille" and "Words With Friends," in a cash-and-stock deal valued at about $12.7 billion.

The acquisition announced this week would wed a powerhouse in console gaming, Take-Two, with a mobile gaming company with an almost cult-like following.

Zynga shareholders will receive $3.50 in cash and $6.36 in shares of Take-Two common stock for each share of Zynga outstanding stock at closing. The transaction is valued at $9.86 per share of Zynga common stock.

"This strategic combination brings together our best-in-class console and PC franchises, with a

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ONY

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zynga
WELCOME HOME
TICKETS ON SALE NOW
SAN FRANCISCO OPERA
SFOPERA.COM

market-leading, diversified mobile publishing platform that has a rich history of innovation and creativity," Take-Two Chairman and CEO Strauss Zelnick said in a prepared statement. He will retain those roles when the companies become one.

Take-Two anticipates the deal will help bring about mobile versions of some of its console and personal computer based games.

Take-Two said it anticipates approximately $100 million in annual cost savings within the first two years after the transaction is complete.

Zynga CEO Frank Gibeau and its president of publishing, Bernard Kim, will oversee the integration and day-to-day operations of the combined Zynga and T2 Mobile Games business, which will operate under the Zynga brand as its own label within the Take-Two.

Take-Two will also expand its board to 10 members upon closing, adding two members from Zynga's board.

The transaction includes a go-shop provision, giving Zynga 45 days to hear alternative proposals.

The deal is expected to close during the first quarter of Take-Two's fiscal 2023, ending June 30. It still needs approval of both Take-Two and Zynga stockholders. It has received approval from both companies' boards.

Shares of Zynga Inc., based in San Francisco, jumped 52.5% to $9.15. Shares of Take-Two Interactive Software, Inc., based in New York City, fell 8.7% to $150.25.

SPACE TELESCOPE'S 'GOLDEN EYE' OPENS, LAST MAJOR HURDLE

NASA's new space telescope opened its huge, gold-plated, flower-shaped mirror Saturday (08), the final step in the observatory's dramatic unfurling.

The last portion of the 21-foot (6.5-meter) mirror swung into place at flight controllers' command, completing the unfolding of the James Webb Space Telescope.

"I'm emotional about it. What an amazing milestone. We see that beautiful pattern out there in the sky now," said Thomas Zurbuchen, chief of NASA's science missions.

More powerful than the Hubble Space Telescope, the $10 billion Webb will scan the

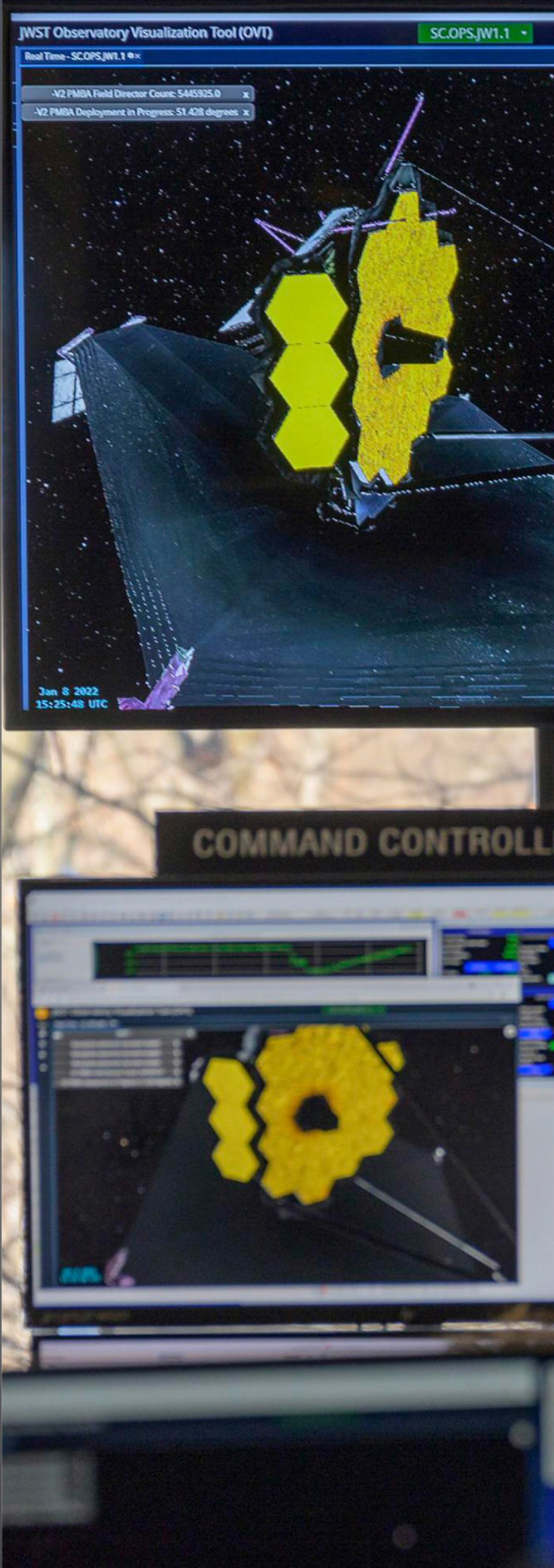
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Image: Bill Ingalls

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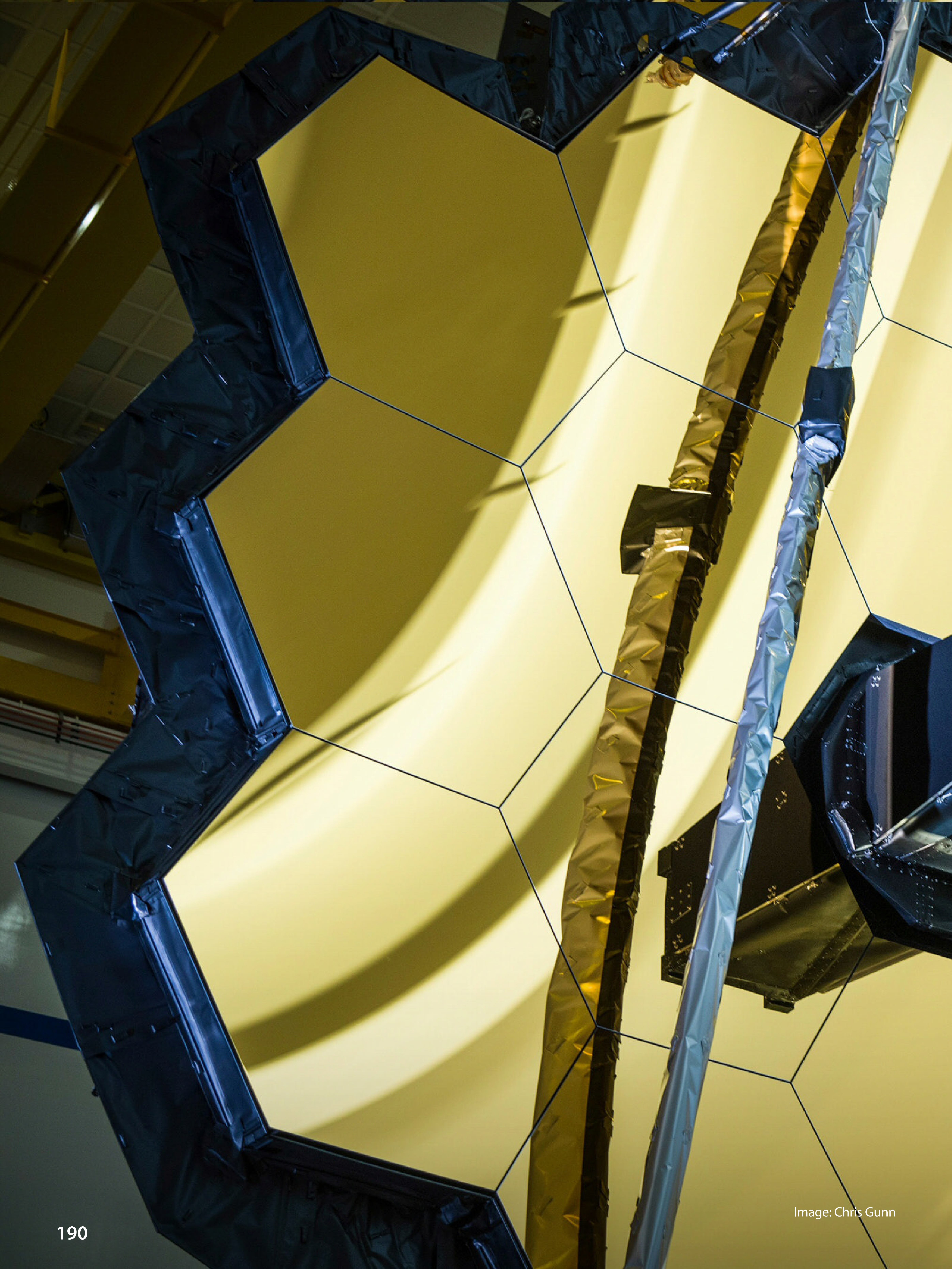

Image: Chris Gunn

cosmos for light streaming from the first stars and galaxies formed 13.7 billion years ago. To accomplish this, NASA had to outfit Webb with the largest and most sensitive mirror ever launched — its "golden eye," as scientists call it.

Webb is so big that it had to be folded orgami-style to fit in the rocket that soared from South America two weeks ago. The riskiest operation occurred earlier in the week, when the tennis court-size sunshield unfurled, providing subzero shade for the mirror and infrared detectors.

HOME COVID TESTS TO BE COVERED BY INSURERS STARTING SATURDAY

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Starting Saturday, private health insurers will be required to cover up to eight home COVID-19 tests per month for people on their plans. The Biden administration announced the change Monday as it looks to lower costs and make testing for the virus more convenient amid rising frustrations.

Under the new policy, first detailed to the AP, Americans will be able to either purchase home testing kits for free under their insurance or submit receipts for the tests for reimbursement, up to the monthly per-person limit. A family of four, for instance, could be reimbursed for up to 32 tests per month. PCR tests and rapid tests ordered or administered by a health provider will continue to be fully covered by insurance with no limit.

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President Joe Biden faced criticism over the holiday season for a shortage of at-home rapid tests as Americans traveled to see family amid the surge in cases from the more transmissible omicron variant. Now the administration is working to make COVID-19 home tests more accessible, both by increasing supply and bringing down costs.

Later this month, the federal government will launch a website to begin making 500 million at-home COVID-19 tests available via mail. The administration also is scaling up emergency rapid-testing sites in areas experiencing the greatest surges in cases.

The insurer-covered testing would dramatically reduce costs for many Americans, and the administration hopes that by easing a barrier to more regular at-home testing, it can help slow the spread of the virus, get kids back into school more quickly and help people gather safely.

“This is all part of our overall strategy to ramp up access to easy-to-use, at-home tests at no cost,” Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a statement. “By requiring private health plans to cover people’s at-home tests, we are further expanding Americans’ ability to get tests for free when they need them.”

Biden announced the federal requirement late last year, and it kicks in on Jan. 15, but the administration had been silent until now on details of the plan.

The administration is trying to incentivize private insurers to cover the tests up-front and without a cumbersome reimbursement process. Insurance plans that work with pharmacies and retailers to cover the up-front costs of the tests will be required to reimburse only up to $12 per test if purchased through an out-of-network retailer. Plans that don't move proactively to set up a network of pharmacies would have to cover the full retail price that the customer paid — which could be more than $12 per test.

A major health insurance industry group said insurers would carry out the administration's order, but cautioned consumers it won't be as easy as flipping a switch.

"Health insurance providers will work as quickly as possible to implement this guidance in ways that limit consumer confusion and challenges," Matt Eyles, president of America's Health Insurance Plans, said in a statement. "While there will likely be some hiccups in early days, we will work with the administration to swiftly address issues as they arise."

The group said it supports provisions in the Biden administration plan to counteract potential price gouging on tests.

Only tests purchased on or after Jan. 15 will be required to be reimbursed, the administration said. Some insurers may choose to cover the costs of at-home tests purchased earlier, but they won't have to.

Mina Bressler, a mother of two and a therapist in San Mateo, California, was able to buy rapid test kits online and shared some with a parent who works in the service industry and doesn't have time to "sit at her computer every hour refreshing the Walmart page to see when tests are in stock."

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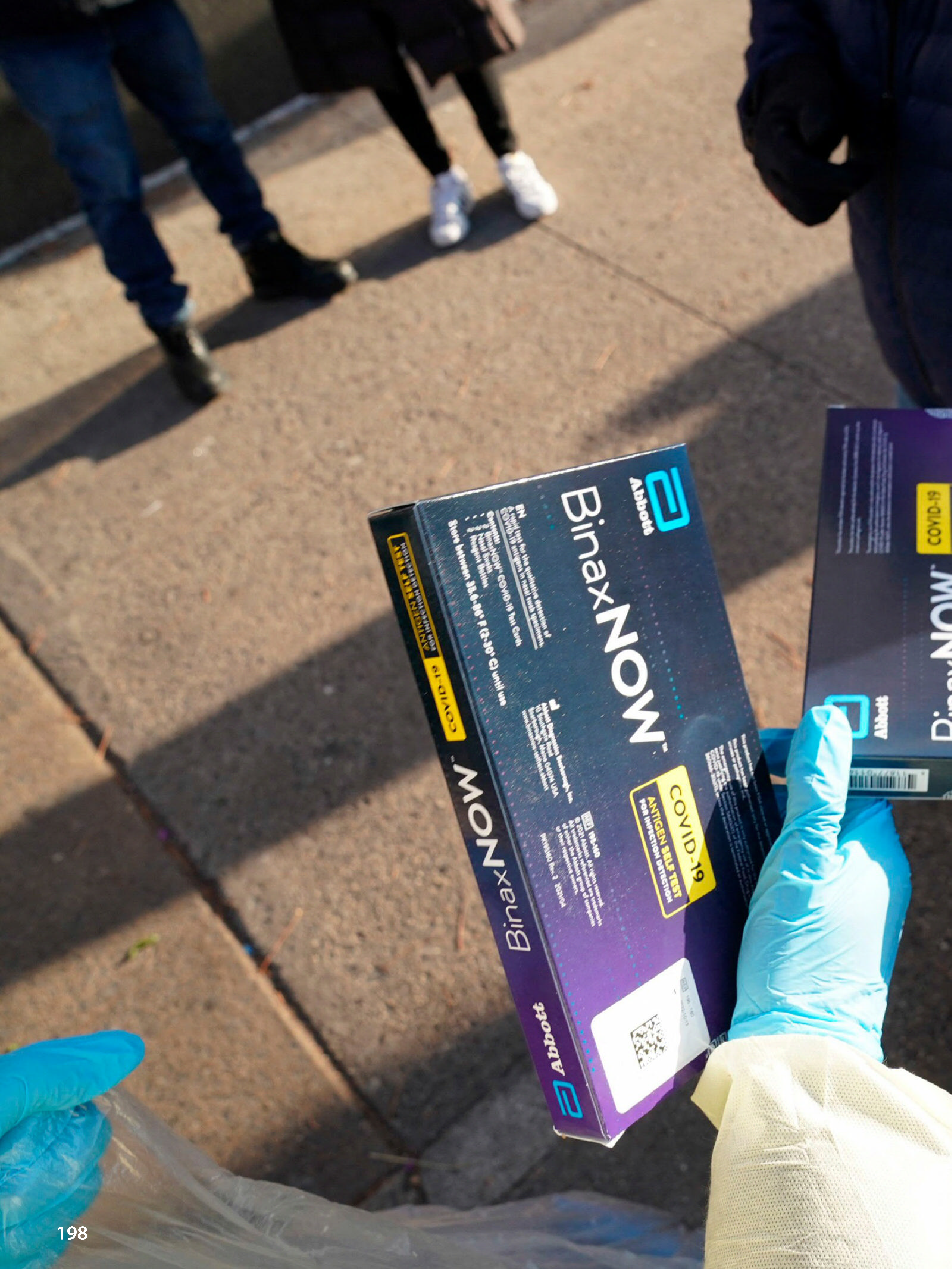
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"I gave her some and her kids went to school. That's one time and there's a million of her," Bressler said.

"Just like vaccines becoming available really shone a light on the inequity of what's going on in this pandemic, I think testing is the new flashlight for that because who's going online stalking Walmart? It's not the most vulnerable people in the county," Bressler added.

Americans on Medicare won't be able to get tests reimbursed through the federal insurance plan, but Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program plans are required to cover the cost of at-home tests fully. Those who are not on a covered insurance plan can receive free tests through the forthcoming federal website or from some local community centers and pharmacies.

JAPAN TYCOON MAEZAWA RETURNS FROM SPACE WITH BUSINESS DREAMS

“Space now,” was what Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa wanted to tweet for years. He finally really did it, from the International Space Station.

“The space market holds so much potential,” he said at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club in Tokyo, his first news conference in Japan after returning to earth before Christmas.

Maezawa, who heads a company called Start Today, is preparing to invest in various businesses which may develop from the ongoing research by NASA, the Japanese equivalent called JAXA and others. But he wants first to recover from his recent celestial adventure: returning to life with gravity has proved heavier than he’d expected, he said.

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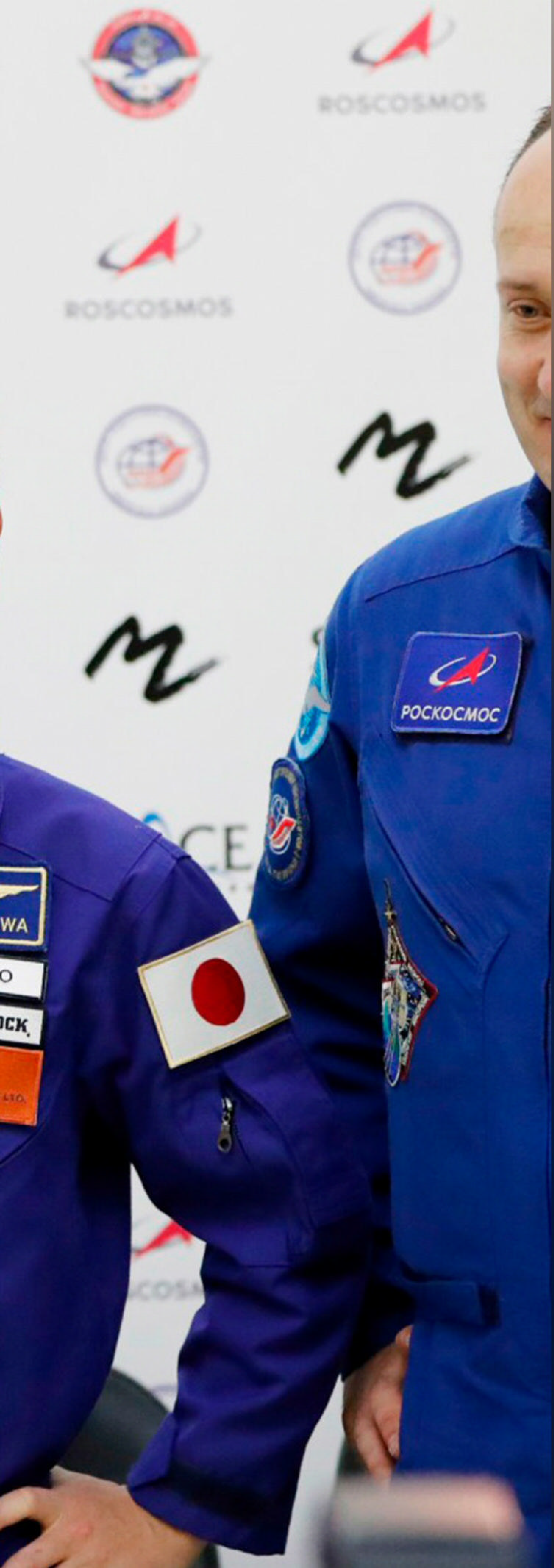

Maezawa, 46, blasted off in a Russian Soyuz spacecraft along with a Russian cosmonaut Dec. 8, becoming the first self-paying tourist to visit the station since 2009.

He returned to earth after spending 12 days at the orbiting outpost, where he took videos of himself clowning around in weightlessness, shaping water droplets into bubbles and punting a golf ball drifting toward a flag in the spacecraft.

The clips, taken by astronaut Yozo Hirano, who accompanied Maezawa, have been posted on YouTube, drawing millions of views.

He tweeted "uchyu nau," or "space now," in the style Japanese often use on the popular social media to relay what they're up to, such as "partying now," or "dinner now."

"Here is what I really wanted say. My first tweet from space," said the post following one with a photo of him wearing a T-shirt and shorts, floating cross-legged in a meditation pose.

He said he would like to tweet "moon now" next. He has booked an orbit around the moon aboard Tesla CEO Elon Musk's Starship, scheduled in the next few years, possibly as early as next year.

"I don't know when exactly I should tweet that," he said, as he wouldn't be landing on the moon. "Maybe when we get to the back side of the moon."

Maezawa has more than 11 million Twitter followers and has emerged as a flamboyant celebrity known for a free-wheeling managerial style that's rare in Japan's conformist, staid business world.

He ran an import CD business and played in a rock band before starting an online fashion business in 1998. Famous for dating movie stars, Maezawa has been both admired and ridiculed for his lavish purchases, including a Stradivarius violin and artworks by Jean-Michel Basquiat and Andy Warhol.

In 2019, Maezawa resigned as CEO of e-commerce company Zozo Inc. to devote his time to space travel, selling his business to Yahoo Japan. Forbes magazine estimates his wealth at $1.9 billion.

How much Maezawa paid for his voyage has been the topic of much speculation and skepticism. Reports put the price tag at more than $80 million. Maezawa declined again to disclose the cost.

But he said living in space has him appreciating the everyday more: the wind, the changing seasons, smells and sushi.

Maezawa hopes that one day the world's leaders could make that same trip. Planet Earth is "100 times more beautiful" than any photo he had ever seen, he said, and so maybe they would also realize the importance of working together.

"That is my dream," he said.

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AS SPENDING BILL STALLS, BIDEN CLIMATE GOALS REMAIN ELUSIVE

President Joe Biden faces a steep path to achieve his ambitious goal of slashing planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2030, amid legislative gridlock that has stalled a $2 trillion package of social and environmental initiatives.

Biden's Build Back Better plan, which contains $550 billion in spending and tax credits aimed at promoting clean energy, was sidetracked by Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin of West Virginia, who said just before Christmas that he could not support the legislation as written.

Democrats insist they are moving forward on the sweeping package, which also would bolster family services, health care and other programs. Manchin signaled in recent days that climate-related provisions were unlikely to be a deal-breaker, but the bill has taken a back seat to voting rights legislation and other Democratic priorities.

Even without the legislation, Biden can pursue his climate agenda through rules and regulations. But those can be undone by subsequent presidents, as demonstrated by Biden reversing Trump administration rules that rolled back protections put into place under Barack Obama.

Experts cite Biden's executive authority to regulate tailpipe emissions from cars and trucks, as well as restrict emissions from power plants and other industrial sources, and the federal government's vast power to approve renewable energy projects on federal lands and waters.

Indeed, the Environmental Protection Agency announced new tailpipe rules for cars and trucks the day after Manchin's bombshell announcement Dec. 19. The next day, the

Interior Department announced approval of two large-scale solar projects in California and moved to open up public lands in other Western states to solar development as part of the administration's efforts to counter climate change by shifting from fossil fuels.

The administration also has access to tens of billions of dollars under the bipartisan infrastructure law approved in November, including $7.5 billion to create a national network of electric vehicle chargers; $5 billion to deliver thousands of electric school buses nationwide; and $65 billion to upgrade the power grid to reduce outages and facilitate expansion of renewable energy such as wind and solar power.

"I think the U.S. has a lot of tools and a lot of options to make gains on climate in the next decade, said John Larsen, an energy systems expert and partner at the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm.

"Build Back Better is helpful" to meet Biden's goals, "but if you don't have Build Back Better, that doesn't mean nothing happens, Larsen said. "It just makes the task ahead a bit more challenging.

Larsen is co-author of a Rhodium Group study last fall that found that passage of the Build Back Better package, along with the bipartisan infrastructure law and regulations by key federal agencies and states, could cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by 45% to 51% below 2005 levels in 2030.

The Biden bill offers incentives for electric car purchases, development of technology to capture and store carbon emissions, and

construction of wind and solar farms, among other provisions.

Global leaders made progress at a November climate summit in Scotland, "but there needs to be much more" action taken, said Penn State climate scientist Michael Mann. "And for the U.S. to be able to do its part, we need the climate provisions of Build Back Better to pass Congress as soon as possible.

Jesse Jenkins, an energy systems engineer at Princeton University who has led an effort to model the Build Back Better bill's effect on U.S. emissions, said there is "a yawning gap" between where U.S. emissions are today "and where we need to be to hit President Biden's climate targets."

Such a gap "is unlikely to be bridged by executive action or state policy alone, Jenkins said in an email. The Princeton model estimates that the United States will fall 1.3 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent short of Biden's 2030 climate commitment without the Build Back Better law.

Carbon dioxide equivalent is a standard measurement for the range of so-called greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, that are generated from the burning of coal and petroleum and from other industrial uses and agriculture, and trap heat in the atmosphere.

Still, Jenkins remains optimistic about U.S. climate action.

"I do not accept the premise that the Build Back Better package is dead, he wrote, adding that he thinks "there is still a very good chance that Congress passes the climate provisions and some combination of social policies being pushed by Democrats.

“The consequences of failure are untenable, and the climate clock only moves in one direction, Jenkins said.

Sen. Tina Smith, D-Minn., said she’s confident Biden and his administration will make good use of their current regulatory authority, as well as billions of dollars in new spending in the bipartisan infrastructure law. But on their own, those tools are not enough to meet Biden’s climate goals, she said. Rules imposed by one administration can be undone by the next, as Biden and former President Donald Trump have both demonstrated repeatedly.

Trump withdrew the U.S. from the global Paris climate accord and rolled back dozens of regulations imposed by his Democratic predecessor, Obama. Biden, in turn, has moved to reverse Trump on a range of actions, from rejoining the Paris agreement to canceling the Keystone XL oil pipeline and pausing new oil and gas leasing on federal lands and waters.

Biden has elevated the issue of climate change across the U.S. government, signing an executive order to make the government carbon-neutral by 2050 and converting to an all-electric fleet of car and trucks by 2035.

Even so, Biden’s efforts can only go so far without an assist from Congress.

“Regulatory authority is no substitute for congressional action, Smith said. “That’s why it’s so important that we pass the strongest bill possible, and that’s what we’re focusing on doing.

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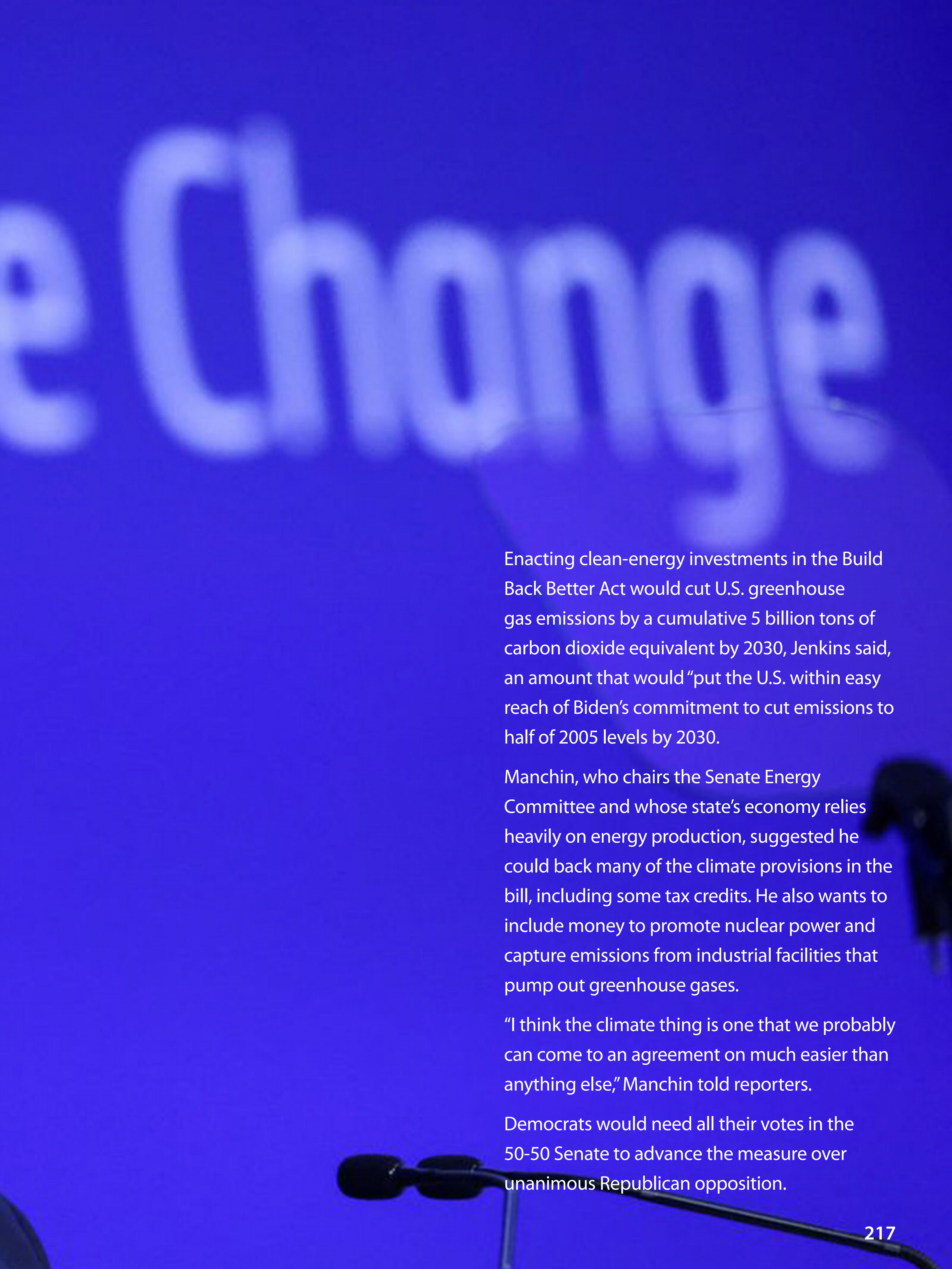

Enacting clean-energy investments in the Build Back Better Act would cut U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by a cumulative 5 billion tons of carbon dioxide equivalent by 2030, Jenkins said, an amount that would "put the U.S. within easy reach of Biden's commitment to cut emissions to half of 2005 levels by 2030.

Manchin, who chairs the Senate Energy Committee and whose state's economy relies heavily on energy production, suggested he could back many of the climate provisions in the bill, including some tax credits. He also wants to include money to promote nuclear power and capture emissions from industrial facilities that pump out greenhouse gases.

"I think the climate thing is one that we probably can come to an agreement on much easier than anything else," Manchin told reporters.

Democrats would need all their votes in the 50-50 Senate to advance the measure over unanimous Republican opposition.

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